

**The Guyana-Venezuela Territorial Controversy: the
International Approaches of the Government of
Guyana, 1966-1992**

by

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Abstract

This thesis presents a case study of small state diplomacy. It investigates the international approaches of Guyana from 1966 to 1992, to the territorial controversy with Venezuela.

The Anglo-Venezuelan dispute over the boundary with British Guiana was settled by arbitration in 1899, but was reopened in 1962. British Guiana gained its independence in May 1966, after an agreement was signed in Geneva, which designated the once settled dispute a "controversy". The foreign policy strategies deployed by Guyana demonstrate the extent to which a small state can effectively utilize diplomacy. The thesis challenges those interpretations which have viewed Guyana's foreign policy mainly in terms of a mechanism used by the government to secure legitimacy. Such arguments fail to consider the multifaceted characteristic of foreign policy and the threat to Guyana's territorial integrity from the more powerful Venezuela. It is contended that it would be more accurate to state that during periods of tensions with Venezuela, preservation of the Guyanese state was the principal goal of foreign policy. When relations improved, this goal was of continued importance, but other goals became prominent.

The thesis analyses Guyanese-Venezuelan relations as Caracas pursued its claim. It evaluates Guyana's international response as its main defence strategy, given that state's military and economic weaknesses vis-à-vis Venezuela. It assesses the effectiveness of Burnham's vitriolic diplomacy 1966-1985 and the more subtle form during the Hoyte administration, 1985-1992. An examination of the foreign ministries' archives in London, Washington, Caracas and Port-of-Spain was

conducted to gain insights into the interaction of the of the dispute's re-emergence and cold war concerns over Guyana. The measures taken by the USA, Britain, Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago to ensure that Venezuelan action did not affect Burnham's rule are revealed. Burnham's role in the signing of the 1966 Geneva Agreement is also explored.

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List of Abbreviations

AD - Acción Democrática
AFL-CIO - American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations
BG - British Guiana
CARICOM - Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARIFESTA - Caribbean Festival of Arts
CARIFTA - Caribbean Free Trade Association
CHOGM - Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers up to 1969 and thereafter, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CIA - Central Intelligence Agency
CO - Colonial Office Records, Public Record Office, London
COPEI - Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente
EIU - Economist Intelligence Unit
FO - Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office, London
FCO - Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, Public Record Office, London
FINEXPO - Fondo de Financiamiento de las Exportaciones
GDF - Guyana Defence Force
GOB - Government of Brazil
GOG - Government of Guyana
GOV - Government of Venezuela
HMG - Her Majesty's Government, United Kingdom
ICJ - International Court of Justice
IDB - Inter-American Development Bank
IIR - Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies, St Augustine
IISS - International Institute for Strategic Studies
MEA - Ministry of External Affairs, Georgetown
MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgetown
MRE - Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Caracas
NAM or NOAL - Non-Aligned Movement (NOAL in Spanish)
OAS - Organization of American States
OAU - Organization of African Unity
OPEC - Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OTP - Office of the President, Georgetown
PNC - People's National Congress
PNC/UF - People National Congress/United Force
PPP - People's Progressive Party
PREM - Records of the Prime Minister's Office, Public Record Office, London
PRO - Public Record Office
PSI - Public Service International
RG 59 Series - Records of the Department of State, Washington DC
SCMFA - Standing Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, CARICOM
TUC - Trades Union Council, Georgetown
UF - United Force
US or USA - United States of America
UN or ONU - United Nations (ONU in Spanish)

Chapter 1:
**Small States and Diplomacy as Defence: the Case of Guyana,
1966-1992**

Summary

This thesis presents a case study of small state diplomacy through an analysis of the international approaches of the government of Guyana, 1966-1992, to the territorial controversy with Venezuela. I argue that the foreign policy strategies deployed demonstrate the extent to which a small state can effectively utilize multilateral diplomacy to mobilize international support in the face of threats. As such, the thesis challenges those interpretations of Guyana's foreign policy that have viewed it purely in terms of being a mechanism to perpetuate rule or secure legitimacy by a government which was lacking in this latter respect. It is the contention here that such arguments are, at best, simplistic, since they fail to take into account the multifaceted characteristic of foreign policy goals and specifically, the threat to Guyana's territorial integrity from its larger and more powerful western neighbour.

The use of foreign policy as a defence mechanism emerged in the immediate post-independence period as the key strategy in the government of Guyana's approach to dealing with Venezuela's claims to a substantial portion of its territory. This strategy in response to threats, real or perceived, has centred on publicising the problems on the international stage with a view to winning support and in so doing, provide what it is hoped would be a deterrent to the Venezuelan occupation of Essequibo county, the largest and western-most of Guyana's three counties. The international approaches emerged because of: (a) Guyana's military and economic weakness vis-à-vis Venezuela made engaging the support of third parties a necessity for the former; (b) the failure of the Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham government in Guyana to secure a defence agreement with the departing colonial and/or regional power at independence in 1966; and (c)

Burnham's confidence of winning the support of the Afro-Asian bloc on the international stage.

Any understanding of the international approaches of the government of Guyana to its territorial controversy with Venezuela must seek firstly to locate it in the context of British Guiana's independence struggles. This is because: (a) the nineteenth century dispute was re-opened at this time; (b) it became embroiled in the cold war concerns of a Marxist government possibly leading the country to independence in the US's backyard; and (c) the signing of the Geneva Agreement, which accorded the settled dispute the status of a "controversy", became the price which Burnham was willing to pay to lead British Guiana to independence. I have unearthed instances of Washington and London intervening on behalf of the Burnham government in the late 1960s to get Caracas to reduce tensions in order to ensure that Marxist leader Cheddi Jagan did not form the government in Guyana. In this regard, London was also instrumental in forging ties between Brasilia and Georgetown.

Central to the arguments advanced in this thesis is cognisance that foreign policy is multifaceted in terms of aims and outcomes. As such, there is recognition that in pursuing international action in relation to the controversy, the government may have gained a level of prestige which enhanced its status on the domestic stage. The rise of the third world movement, which was facilitated by the détente of the 1970s, presented the government of Guyana with enhanced opportunities for international approaches to the territorial controversy. In the process, this increased its prestige amongst its peers on the international stage and at home. The thesis argues that to simply dismiss the foreign policy as being a tactic or "Machiavellian" diversion away from internal problems, as

some writers have done, is to escape meaningful academic enquiry into a small state's effective use of multilateral diplomacy.

I argue that during periods of heightened tensions with Venezuela, preservation of the Guyanese state's territorial integrity was the principal goal of foreign policy. At times of improved relations, this goal continued to be of importance in Georgetown, but other foreign policy goals assumed prominence: prestige enhancement for the regime and economic prosperity.

The thesis argues that the government of Guyana was particularly careful not to solicit the support of the Eastern Bloc and Cuba on a bilateral basis in the controversy despite growing links with these areas during the Burnham government in the 1970s and 1980s. This factor, I argue, is a direct result of the government's cognisance of the strategic importance of the US in the controversy and hence the need not to take action that may push Washington into openly supporting Venezuela, given the effect this may have in emboldening Venezuelan actions against Guyana.

The administration of Hugh Desmond Hoyte from 1985 to 1992, offers an interesting contrast to the Burnham era 1964-1985, in spite of both governments belonging to the same PNC party. This is because international lobbying against Venezuela's claim continued, but in a more subtle form. It is posited that America's endorsement of the Hoyte administration would, at least, have influenced Caracas' cordial engagement with Georgetown, if not being, in part, the result of direct intervention by Washington. Personal, as well as secret diplomacy, between Hoyte and his Venezuelan counterparts were important in advancing ties between Guyana and Venezuela.

I examine the bilateral and, in particular, secret diplomacy, between Caracas and Georgetown as productive channels in advancing towards a solution of the territorial controversy. This is especially in relation to The Protocol to the Geneva Agreement in 1970 and the Hoyte-Lusinchi/Hoyte-Andrés Pérez meetings between 1987 and 1992 which furthered talks and cooperation, resulting in the UN Good Offices process in 1990. New insights are provided into these topics through a study of recently-released Department of State documents and interviews conducted with those involved in the areas concerned.

The internationalising of the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy as the prime facet of the government of Guyana's approach to this issue has not been without its difficulties, especially during the Burnham era. Evidence of this can be found in the problems encountered with CARICOM - a key source of support in the Guyanese government's strategy - in the early 1980s.

The thesis offers fresh insights into the development of relations between Guyana and Venezuela in the early 1960s and 1970s based on an analysis of recently released documents from foreign ministries in London, Washington, Georgetown, Caracas and Port-of-Spain. An attempt is made to fill the existing gaps in the literature on Guyana's relations with Venezuela, both in relation to the controversy and more generally, through an examination of published primary and second material. This has been supplemented extensively by interviews with key personnel, namely ministers and policy officials, directly involved in the area under study.

In view of the ongoing controversy over the Essequibo, this thesis concludes by arguing that though south-south institutions, such as the NAM, have lost influence, the

most effective approach for the government of Guyana is the continued involvement of third parties, especially international bodies.

Organization of the Thesis

The literature on small states and/or developing countries has emphasised the importance of personality or the charismatic leader in the politics of such entities.¹ Searwar, in particular, states, "The ruling group, in the case of the Caribbean, nearly always reflects the perceptions and views of a dominant leader."² This fits the typology of the "predominant leader" developed by Hermann, where decision-making is vested in a single individual.³ It is not the intention here to contribute to this debate, but I have found it useful for analytical purposes to divide the period under study in accordance with the leadership changes in Guyana. This is because there are variations in the international approaches to the Guyana-Venezuela controversy, 1966-1992, as a result of: (a) the restraining influences of a right-wing coalition partner in the early stages of government; (b) differences in leadership styles; and (c) differences in the international environment. Hence, the substantive analysis has been categorized into the three periods: "The Burnham-D'Aguiar Years 1964-1968", which comprise the PNC/UF coalition government led by Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham as prime minister and Peter D'Aguiar as finance minister; "The Burnham Years 1969-1985" when the PNC became the sole party in government led by Burnham as prime minister and later executive president; and "The Hoyte Years, 1985-1992" that followed Burnham's death, but which continued with the PNC in power, led by the former economic development minister,

¹ See, as examples, Hill in Clapham (1977), pp.6-7 and Ince in Ince et al. (1986).

² Searwar in Bryan et al. (2000), p.5.

³ Hermann et al. in Hermann et. al. (1987).

Hugh Desmond Hoyte. The Burnham period, has been examined across two chapters, "The Burnham Years 1969-1980" and "The Burnham Years 1981-1985" in order to aid analysis of this lengthy period of office.

Chapter 1 explores the issues of small states and diplomacy. It also provides an historical background to the post-world war two political developments in Guyana and offers a critique of the existing literature on Guyana's foreign policy and the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy.

Chapter 2, "The Guyana-Venezuela Territorial Controversy", provides an historical background on the nineteenth century Anglo-Venezuela dispute before examining the period surrounding the reopening of the dispute in 1962 and up to the signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1966.

Chapter 3, "The Burnham-D'Aguiar Years, 1964-1968", focuses on the period immediately after independence (26 May 1966) when the Guyanese leadership assumed responsibility for foreign affairs and developed its own international strategies in response to a tense period of relations with Venezuela over Essequibo.

Chapters 4 and 5, "The Burnham Years 1969-1980" and "The Burnham Years 1981-1985", analyse the international approaches to the controversy during the lengthy tenure of the Burnham government. Both chapters are divided into two parts to facilitate analysis, each part reflecting a particular period in Guyana-Venezuela relations and the government's international approaches.

Chapter 6, "The Hoyte Years 1985-1992", examines the altered course of international approaches to the Guyana-Venezuela controversy during the administration of Hugh Desmond Hoyte.

Terms and Definitions

The nineteenth century Anglo-Venezuelan dispute-cum-twentieth century controversy over Essequibo county, represents a significant claim to five-eighths of Guyana's 216 000 square kilometres of territory. Child defines territorial conflicts as those stemming "...from disputes over the possession and sovereign rights of portions of the earth's surface, be they land or water." He distinguishes border conflicts as those which "...flow from the strains and tensions that seem to emerge almost inevitably when two sovereignties meet at a frontier."⁴ Given the size of the Venezuelan claim to part of the state of Guyana and using Child's typology, I have opted for the designation in this thesis of the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy.⁵ The controversy has been categorized as the biggest territorial dispute in Latin America.⁶ October 3, 1999, marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the arbitration award that was made in Paris to settle the Anglo-Venezuelan territorial dispute. This date has also served as a reminder to the government in Georgetown that the nineteenth century dispute continues in the form of a controversy since Venezuela renounces the validity of the 1899 award. The Guyanese government from independence to 1992 used its foreign policy, principally relying on lobbying international institutions and individual states, as its main weapon to counter Venezuela's territorial claims to Essequibo.

⁴ Child (1985), pp.13-14. Child's typology of conflict in Latin America, of which territorial and border conflicts are two types, is a modified version of that developed for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

⁵ Elsewhere Venezuela's claim has been described as the "Venezuela-Guyana Boundary Dispute" (e.g. Braveboy-Wagner (1984a and 1984b) and "Guyana-Venezuela Border Dispute" (e.g. Narine Singh, 1982). Whether the terms "boundary", "border" or "territorial" are chosen, it is accurate to refer to Venezuela's claim to Essequibo post-1966 as "a controversy" since this is the official definition given in the 1966 Geneva Agreement which will be discussed in chapter 2.

⁶ Braveboy-Wagner in Hopkins (1984b), p.229.

Let us examine the question of what a "small state" is.⁷ A number of variables have been used to construct the elements of size in state-types, including land and population sizes, as well as economic resources. In this regard, for example, Taylor used three criteria by which micro-states can be measured: population, GNP and area. As Taylor admits, however, the use of any measurement to designate states as either macro or micro ultimately depends on the criteria used by the researcher.⁸ The Commonwealth Consultative Group's 1985 report notes that the only common denominator to the tools of measurement for small states, amongst the many interpretations, is population.⁹ And even this factor has been subjected to different calculations in the attempts at definition.

Hein's compilation on the policy-directed interpretations of what constitutes such entities is indicative of the discord that has hindered an exact definition. He identifies as a "high cut-off point" figures ranging between 5 and 15 million¹⁰. Vital's study, which uses population and economic differentials to classify state types, varies the population range of small states from 10/15 million to 20/30 million for developed and developing countries, respectively. He readily admits that what he terms "micro-states" (states with even smaller population figures than those he classified as small states), "...constitutes yet another class of states with reasonably distinct and characteristic problems of their own".¹¹ A similar conclusion was reached by Barston who used the 10-15 million mark to designate small states and singled out for special mention, the existence of states with less than a million people. He recognized that even within that category there were

⁷ Wood in Benedict (1967), p.29, notes that the 1962-1964 seminars of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, from where his chapter was originally presented, found it "impossible" to decide on the meaning of "smallness".

⁸ Taylor in Rapaport et al. (1971), p.199.

⁹ Commonwealth Consultative Group (1985), p.8.

differences in material wealth and resources, for instance, between Luxembourg and Mauritius.¹² Such yardsticks of high population measurement predate the proliferation of a number of miniscule states from the late 1960s as decolonization advanced.¹³ Hein provides a list of studies which have used the one million upper population mark to define small states, drawing attention to those which have dropped the upper limitations to just a few hundred thousand.¹⁴

Further potential for confusion exists between the names given to the smaller states, even when there is consensus on the population size limit. Plischke's study on microstates, for instance, uses the upper cut off point of 300, 000 people to delineate such states, but implements a further division of "submicrostates" identified as those states with less than 100, 000.¹⁵ Hein, using the terminology of "microstates", classifies them as those countries within the one million population limit.¹⁶ The Commonwealth Consultative Group, which used the same numerical value, has opted instead for the title of "small states".¹⁷ Clarke and Payne have observed in their 1987 publication that "...something of a consensus has recently emerged about taking a population of one million or less as the critical threshold" in defining small states; they adopt this emerging standard for their own work.¹⁸ In the 1990s the UN singled out for special consideration small island developing states which, in its view, faced particular ecological, economic

¹⁰ Hein in Dommen and Hein (1985), pp.24-25.

¹¹ Vital (1967), pp.8-9.

¹² Barston in Schou and Brundtland (1971), pp.41, 45.

¹³ Hein, op.cit., pp.23-25.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.24-25.

¹⁵ Plischke (1977), Preface.

¹⁶ Hein, op.cit., p.16. See also Harden (1985), p.viii, who uses the same terminology.

¹⁷ Commonwealth Consultative Group (1985), p.9.

¹⁸ Clarke and Payne in Clarke and Payne (1987), p.xviii.

and other vulnerabilities.¹⁹ More recently, the 1997 report by the Commonwealth Advisory Group set a population limit of 1.5 million or less to define small states. The increase of half a million from the 1985 Commonwealth Consultative Group report is said to be reflective of general population increases in small states. It follows that the designation of Guyana as a small state, given its population of less than one million people, is apt, irrespective of whether the 1 or 1.5 million mark is used.

We may go one step further in classifying Guyana not only as small, but also as a weak state. According to Handel, "the power of a state is...best measured not against all other countries, but in relation to its neighbors, and by the degree to which the strength at its disposal matches its national goals and ambitions."²⁰ The designation of Guyana as a weak state vis-à-vis Venezuela becomes evident when the economic, military and other capacities of the two states are examined. As Table 1 indicates, by all variables - population, territory, economy and military - Guyana is weaker than Venezuela. The latter is powerful not just in relation to its eastern neighbour, but as Myers argues, Venezuela had emerged as one of three new regional powers in the 1980s.²¹ It was in recognition of its weaknesses vis-à-vis Venezuela that the government of Guyana in 1966 decided to opt for diplomacy as the only mechanism by which it could adequately seek to secure the state's territorial integrity.

¹⁹ UN (1992 and 1994). See also Briguglio in *World Development* (1995).

²⁰ Handel (1990), p.52. See also pp.52-53 for further details on the economic, military and international systemic factors which are used to designate states as weak.

²¹ Myers (1985), p.111. The other two emergent regional powers are said to be Cuba and Mexico.

Table 1: Economic, Military and Other Data on Guyana and Venezuela

	Guyana	Venezuela
1972-1973		
Population	780, 000	11, 150, 000
Total Armed Forces	2, 200	33, 500
Estimated GNP US\$	254 million	11.3 billion
Estimated Defence Expenditure US\$	not available	267 million
Army Personnel	2, 200	20, 000
Navy Personnel	nil manpower and equipment	7, 500 (equipment includes 2 submarines, 3 destroyers and 10 submarine chasers)
Air Force Personnel	nil manpower and equipment	6, 000 (equipment includes 111 combat aircraft)
Paramilitary Personnel	2, 250	10, 000
1983-1984		
Population	890, 000	15, 200, 000
Total Armed Forces	7, 000 (all services part of army)	40, 500
Estimated GNP US\$	511.6 million	69.489 billion
Estimated Defence Expenditure US\$	25 million	1.142 billion
Army Personnel	6, 500	27, 500
Navy Personnel	300 (equipment includes 10 patrol boats)	8, 500 (equipment includes 3 submarines)
Air Force Personnel	200 (8 planes, 6 helicopters)	4, 500 (equipment includes 18 F-16A fighter jets)
Paramilitary Personnel	5, 000	20, 000
2000 (unless otherwise indicated)		
Area km ²	216, 000	912, 050
Population (estimate)	847, 000	24.3 million
Population of the capital (1995 estimate)	254, 000	3.01 million
Urban Population (1997)	36.4%	86.5%
Life Expectancy (years)	61.1 (men), 67.9 (women)	70 (men), 75.7 (women)
Infant Mortality per 1000 live births (1997)	59	21
GDP US\$	827 million	120.5 billion
GDP per head US\$	1, 071	4, 964
Key Export	Agriculture = 50% approx. of export earnings	Oil = 84.2% of export earnings

Sources: EIU (2001a, 2001b); IISS (1972, 1984); and Turner (2000).

Diplomacy as a Defence Mechanism for Small States

The 1983 US invasion of Grenada led to a number of studies on the security of small states, heralding in a thematic synergy between academic studies and policy reports. This marked a shift from earlier concerns about the viability and international participation of such states as they have become independent entities from the 1960s. In a critique of "the notion of viability of very small states", Emmanuel asserts the concept is not without merit, but that it requires conceptualisation, less the implicit prejudices that had marked the earlier debate.²² Blair, in what she terms "the ministate dilemma" considered the issue of whether such states, defined as having under 300, 000 people, should be given full membership at the UN upon independence.²³ The Commonwealth Consultative Group report considered the economy of small states as part of the issue of vulnerability rather than viability. It moved away from the earlier implicit questioning of whether small states should be granted independence to one of accepting their independent status, but recognizing threats specifically faced by such states.²⁴ The report by the Commonwealth Advisory Group (1997) has gone one step further in looking at ways of overcoming the vulnerabilities identified in the 1985 report.

Immediately after the invasion of Grenada, the literature stressed the importance of diplomatic action by small states to ensure security and survival. It is unlikely that

²² See Emmanuel in Lewis (1976), pp.1-15.

²³ Blair (1967). See also UNITAR (1971), pp.11-15, which noted the views in previous studies and the reservations expressed by even the UN secretary-general in 1967 against small states being admitted as full members of the UN or other international organizations. This debate mirrored the earlier discussions concerning the admittance of the then independent small states, such as Liechtenstein, to the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations in the 1920s, UNITAR (1971), pp.114-118, 122.

²⁴ Commonwealth Consultative Group (1985), pp.14-22. Other areas of vulnerability considered in this report include external aggression and threats to territorial and political security.

such action on the part of Grenada would have changed the course of events surrounding the US invasion. However, it will be argued here that the international approaches of the Guyanese government from 1966 to 1992 illustrate the importance of diplomatic action for the security of small states. The issue of protection, security and territorial integrity of small states continued into the 1990s as a policy initiative, led by the UN General Assembly, which has called for respect of the principles of the UN Charter: non-interference in the international affairs of states and peaceful settlement of disputes.²⁵ The Commonwealth has also continued to examine the issue, looking at the new threats to small states' security and how their vulnerability can be overcome.²⁶ Earlier, Barston's study in the late 1980s had identified four types, old and new, of security threats faced by small states: territorial, political, economic and technological.²⁷

The Commonwealth Consultative Group's report of 1985 stresses the importance of diplomacy for small states' security. The report argues:

"In many respects a skilful use of diplomacy within the framework of a prudent and well thought out foreign policy is a small state's first line of defence. Since these states have no military or economic power to wield they are forced to rely on diplomatic means in order to convey to other countries the nature of their national interests in the different areas of international relations that are vital not just to the security but to their very survival. And it is only through effective diplomacy that they can hope to persuade wealthy and powerful nations to enter into relationships with them which can work to their material advantage without necessarily entailing unacceptable constraints on their sovereignty and genuine independence."²⁸

²⁵ See UN (1989 and 1991a) when the issue was brought onto the UN's agenda following threats to small states from the actions of mercenaries. See also UN (1991b) which notes that security concerns include the traditional areas such as threats to territorial security and new areas such as drug-trafficking.

²⁶ Commonwealth Advisory Group (1997) which notes a shift from the geo-political threat of the mid-1980s to the emergent economic and environmental threats to small states in the 1990s. Its findings contrast with the arguments of Easterly and Kraay (2000) of the World Bank, who argue that small states are not a special category requiring special economic measures and that in some cases, their position is better than other states.

²⁷ Barston in Hafiz and Khan (1987), pp.231-232.

²⁸ Commonwealth Consultative Group (1985), p.68.

Linton asserts the validity of these same points in his study which reviews the Commonwealth Consultative Group's report:

"The truism that diplomacy is a state's first line of defence is particularly relevant in the case of small states. Since very small states have no capacity for economic or military leverage, diplomacy for them has a special creative and persuasive function as a means towards securing desired ends which advance the national interest."²⁹

It may be argued, that for small states diplomacy is the *only*, rather than *first* line of defence. This is especially where, as in the case of Guyana, there is no access to the military protection of a more powerful state. Espíndola emphasises the significance of diplomacy to small states even stronger than the Commonwealth Study Group when he argues, "For small states...diplomatic contacts are a matter of survival."³⁰ Reid addresses this point when he argues, "...the need to depend on the external environment for support can impose on microstates a necessity to participate in international affairs to a much greater extent than larger states."³¹ The centrality of diplomacy for such states, not only in terms of security but also resources, has been advanced by Searwar: "For the small state, whether it be in the Caribbean or elsewhere, but particularly in the Caribbean, diplomacy must be the chief instrument in advancing its security and in securing resources."³² But what type of diplomacy are we referring to here? The answer to this question is two-fold: in terms of conceptualisation and form.

In the traditional literature on international relations where the concern is with militarily powerful states, diplomacy is depicted as carrying with it an element of threat.

²⁹ Linton in Bryan et al. (1990), p.268.

³⁰ Espíndola in Clarke and Payne (1987), p.70.

³¹ Reid (1974), p.39.

³² Searwar in *Caribbean Affairs* (1988), p.82.

Morgenthau asserts, "It is the final task of an intelligent diplomacy, intent upon preserving peace, to choose the appropriate means for pursuing its objectives. The means at the disposal of diplomacy are three: persuasion, compromise, and threat of force."³³ Given that small states do not have the third aspect of diplomacy - military might - to fall back on, it is clear that Morgenthau's framework was not designed with them in mind. Yet, we can find elements within it that are applicable to small states, that is, in terms of utilizing national resources on international issues of direct relevance to the state. Morgenthau notes:

"The conduct of a nation's foreign affairs by its diplomats is for national power in peace what military strategy and tactics by its military leaders are for national power in war. It is the art of bringing the different elements of the national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern the national interest most directly."³⁴

In the case of small states, the deployment of national power on international issues also relies on a diplomacy that encompasses the techniques of persuasion and compromise, but with the capacity to mobilise international support being in place of the threat of military might. In this regard, Linton makes a salient point concerning the diplomatic capabilities of small states: "Size is no limitation in respect of diplomatic ability, even if a small population and limited resources mean that the size of the diplomatic establishment and its geographical range are limited."³⁵ While skill is important, these diplomatic limitations do impose impediments on small states' functioning in the international arena; factors that clearly put them at disadvantage vis-à-vis larger states. "The cumulative effect of the impact of very small size on microstate

³³ Morgenthau (1985), p.565.

³⁴ Ibid., p.159.

³⁵ Linton in Clarke and Payne (1987), p.219.

foreign policy decision-making is to reduce the resources which can be brought to bear on the formulation and execution of programmes of action."³⁶

Strategies have been identified for small states to overcome the deficiencies in diplomatic manoeuvrability caused by meagre economic, population and military resources. These techniques invariably centre on utilizing multilateral diplomacy as a means of gaining access to and visibility on the world's stage in order to overcome size limitations. As Searwar argues:

"...despite certain short-term gains that might accrue from secrecy and competition, effective diplomacy must be founded in solidarity, as it is only the group approach which can provide a mechanism for dealing effectively with the unequal power relations in which small states are involved."³⁷

It is often argued that the most effective diplomatic forum for small states to carry out multilateral diplomacy is the United Nations. Linton, for instance, asserts:

"Small states need to maintain few overseas missions, but should seek to maximise their representation in international agencies. Clearly selected major powers and majoring states have priority, but a United Nations presence continues to be of great advantage to small states, giving, as it does unrivalled access to the world community and to technical assistance agencies."³⁸

The salience of the United Nations for small states is a repeated theme in the literature on these entities. Harden's study, coming in the wake of the Grenada crisis, asserts the diplomatic economies of scale to be gained from participation in this world body:

"...representation in the United Nations offers small states a much more cost-effective method of maintaining extensive relations with the outside world, than bilateral diplomacy, which is often too costly both in financial and human terms for micro-states to contemplate. The United Nations location in New York is also helpful since it enables the Permanent Representative of a micro-state to the United Nations to be jointly accredited as Ambassador to Washington."³⁹

³⁶ Reid (1974), p.23.

³⁷ Searwar in *Caribbean Affairs* (1988), p.82.

³⁸ Linton, op.cit., p.219. See also Blair (1967), p.11, who makes a similar point.

³⁹ Harden (1985), pp.15-16. See also Hong in *International Social Science Journal* (1995), p.281.

With a membership body of 189 states in 2000, the UN is the world's major diplomatic centre.⁴⁰ The Commonwealth Consultative Group's report notes the key diplomatic access offered at that organization:

"...the opening three weeks of each annual General Assembly, when most of the world's Foreign Ministers are in attendance, affords small states a unique opportunity to cultivate such relationships at the requisite high level; overtures made at that time can then be followed up through contacts at the various national United Nations missions."⁴¹

This unique feature of the United Nations offers small states the opportunity to mobilize support on issues of importance at the relevant ministerial level of government from states around the world. The opportunity to gain such access in one venue can reduce small states' diplomatic costs; hence, the opening period of the General Assembly is of significance for such entities.

Some of the studies cited above have identified Guyana as being amongst the small states which have used international lobbying at the UN to gain support in the territorial controversy with Venezuela.⁴² Guyana's first foreign minister emphasised the pertinence of this international body to his country when he stated:

"Our Permanent Mission to the United Nations established in New York is one to which we attach very great importance - more particularly since we cannot afford the establishment of Missions in the very large number of countries with whom we have friendly relations and would wish to keep in contact."⁴³

⁴⁰ See Willetts (1978), p.84, who made a similar argument at a time when UN member states numbered 151. The point is emphasised further if we compare the UN to another major diplomatic centre, Washington, which in 2001 had 164 embassies or other diplomatic representation accredited to it, but with some operating from the respective missions to the UN in New York, <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/wint2001>.

⁴¹ Commonwealth Consultative Group (1985), p.69.

⁴² Ibid., pp.70-71; Linton, op.cit., p.219. See also Griffith (1993), p.283; Braveboy-Wagner in *Caribbean Affairs* (1988), pp.82-83; and Braveboy-Wagner (1989), pp.43-44.

⁴³ Ramphal (1967), p.25.

The Guyanese government's international strategies did not only focus on the United Nations. Brundtland notes, international organizations in general can be used by small states "...to mobilize support for their policies by widening the arena of debate and criticism."⁴⁴ In concurrence with Brundtland's and more specifically, Linton's prescription, the administration in Georgetown, 1966-1992, also lobbied major and "majoring states", a regional organization and other multilateral fora.

Post-World War Two Political Developments in British Guiana

British Guiana gained its independence in May 1966 as Guyana and the period before this event is one of the most turbulent in the state's history. It may be argued that any understanding of the approaches of the government of Guyana to its territorial controversy with Venezuela must seek to locate it in the context of British Guiana's independence struggles. This is because: (a) the nineteenth century dispute was re-opened at this time; (b) it became embroiled in the cold war concerns of a Marxist government possibly leading the country to independence in the US's backyard; and (c) the signing of the Geneva Agreement, which accorded the settled dispute the status of a "controversy", became the price paid for Burnham to lead British Guiana to independence.

Described as "the first mass-based multi-racial party in Guyana", ⁴⁵ the People's Progressive Party was formed in January 1950 on the eve of a new constitution.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Barston in Schou and Brundtland (1971), p.46.

⁴⁵ Title of Premdas' article in *Caribbean Quarterly* (1974).

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.13.

According to Premdas, the choice of an African (Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham) and an East Indian (Cheddi Jagan) at the helm of the new party was a deliberate attempt to avoid the communal appeal of candidates in the 1947 election and thus to ensure an appeal to the masses. The new constitution in 1951, named after its chairman John Waddington, introduced universal adult suffrage at age 21, a bicameral legislature comprising the lower house, known as the House of Assembly, and an upper house, known as the State Council. The Waddington constitution placed reserved powers in the governor,⁴⁷ a factor that was to be a source of friction between the elected party and the British government. Elections took place on April 27, 1953, with the PPP emerging the winner by securing 18 out of the 24 seats in the House of Assembly and with 60% of the votes cast.⁴⁸ The PPP's success in the elections demonstrated that the party had managed to cut across communal or ethnic boundaries.⁴⁹

The PPP had only been in government for 133 days when Britain announced the suspension of the Waddington constitution on 9 October 1953. This event was to leave an indelible mark in the political history of British Guiana with the disintegration of the nationalist movement, the practice of politics along ethnic lines and ultimately racial violence. In the view of the British government, the actions and alleged communist links of PPP ministers were definite evidence of a communist plot.⁵⁰

The US has been implicated in the decision to suspend the constitution. Jagan asserted that "...the main cause, I believe, for the suspension of our constitution was

⁴⁷ Smith (1964), p.164.

⁴⁸ Nath (1975b), p.168.

⁴⁹ See Spinner Jr. (1984), pp.36-37, on voting patterns in the elections.

⁵⁰ Command Paper 8980, p.4.

pressure from the government of the United States of America,"⁵¹ citing American involvement at the labour movement level, if not at the governmental level. He implicates Serafino Romualdi of the International Confederation of Trade Unions and the Inter-American Regional Organisation of Workers in fomenting anti-PPP sentiment by being instrumental in the dissolution of the old Trade Union Council which pursued an anti-imperialist policy. Jagan's allegations were confirmed directly by Romuladi in his book highlighting the role of the American labour movement in anti-communist activities:

"I never tried to deny Dr Jagan's charges. As a matter of fact I publicly acknowledged the fact that, having become convinced of Dr Jagan's subservience to the Communist movement since my first visit to British Guiana in 1951, I did everything in my power to strengthen the democratic trade union forces opposed to him and to expose Jagan's pro-communist activities from the day he was elected Prime Minister, following the general elections of April 27, 1953."⁵²

American labour and the CIA therefore played its part in whipping up anti-PPP sentiment.

Following the ousting of the PPP, the British government appointed an interim administration.⁵³ Some PPP ministers were detained and others were jailed (including Mrs Jagan for six months) for breaking restrictions placed on their movements and other charges.⁵⁴ A commission, chaired by Sir James Robertson, was appointed to consider and recommend changes required to the Waddington constitution. Spinner Jr. states, "Far more devastating than its justification of British intervention, the Robertson Commission

⁵¹ Jagan (1966), p.158.

⁵² Romuladi (1967), p.346. It is worth noting that Agee (1963) names Romualdi as the principal CIA agent in Latin America. See also Rose (1992) whose PhD thesis, especially chapter 4, "The Failure of the British Policy in British Guiana, 1953-1957", analyses the State Department and Foreign Office records relating to this period.

⁵³ See Burrowes (1984), pp.67-69, for more details.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.70-73.

exacerbated racial discord between Africans and East Indians, as well as promoted a split between communists and democratic socialists in the PPP."⁵⁵ Amongst the six prominent members labelled "communists" were Dr and Mrs Jagan - leader of the legislative group and general secretary, respectively. Mr Burnham, chairman of the party, was amongst those labelled as "socialists". In the case of Burnham, the report does note that he is "ambiguous".⁵⁶ Furedi cites the Colonial Office correspondence which indicates that HMG did not expect the PPP to unite across ethnic lines, but once that happened, London was determined to move against it. He states, "The hopes of the Colonial Office eventually rested with Forbes Burnham... Government policy was to encourage Burnham to split from Jagan in order to undermine the capacity of the PPP to win multi-ethnic support."⁵⁷ Colonial Office tactics aside, the split between Jagan and Burnham as a result of rivalries for power is believed by some to have been a possibility.⁵⁸

Elections took place in August 1957 under a revised constitution which Smith describes as an "...extremely flexible constitution in which the form of government depended a good deal upon the discretion of the Governor."⁵⁹ Jagan's party won despite boundary changes, which Nath alleges were to the advantage of Burnham's party.⁶⁰ The disintegration of the nationalist movement was completed with the 1957 elections. Despres notes that while prior to the 1953 elections an appeal could be made to the

⁵⁵ Spinner Jr. (1984), p.57. Others espousing a similar view of the Robertson Commission, particularly on the split of the PPP, include Burrowes (1984), p.78; Nath (1976), p.29; and not surprisingly Jagan (1966), pp.199-200.

⁵⁶ Command Paper 9274, p.38.

⁵⁷ Furedi in *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* (1990), p.77.

⁵⁸ Burrowes (1984), p.78. See also Nath (1976), pp.31-35 and Spinner Jr. (1984), pp.61-64, on how Burnham engineered the split.

⁵⁹ Smith, op.cit., p.180.

⁶⁰ Nath (1976), p.45.

Guianese masses based on their sufferings under colonialism, at the 1957 poll, politics had moved down the path of ethnic appeal.⁶¹

Jagan has asserted that the 1957-61 administration was "in office, but not in power."⁶² It was during this time that independence was sought from Britain. Full internal self-government was granted at a conference in March 1960, with defence and external affairs remaining under the British government.⁶³ The 1961 elections, under a new constitution, were the first to be contested by a newly formed party, the United Force, which emerged in 1960.⁶⁴ This party, led by an ethnic Portuguese businessman, Peter D'Aguiar, appealed mainly to middle class business interests in Georgetown.⁶⁵ The PPP once again triumphed in the elections held on August 21, 1961, winning 20 of the 35 seats, followed by the PNC and UF with 11 and 4 seats, respectively.⁶⁶ The victory ended in stalemate once again; this time, with violence.

Jagan notes that the secretary of state for the colonies refused to set a date for independence.⁶⁷ The Guianese premier took the issue of British Guiana's independence to the UN on 18 December 1961.⁶⁸ Subsequently, the British government agreed to hold an independence conference in 1962, in response, officially, to the resolution calling for independence in the British Guiana legislature in November 1961. The conference,

⁶¹ Despres (1967). He also provides an analysis of British Guiana as a plural society including the unifying and disintegrating factors of that society and specifically on the collapse of the nationalist movement.

⁶² Jagan (1966), pp.224-243.

⁶³ Command Paper 988, p.5. Full internal self-government was to take effect with the introduction of a new constitution in August 1961 and the ensuing elections under a first-past-the-post system.

⁶⁴ Command Paper 998, pp.6-7.

⁶⁵ Newman (1964), pp.87-88.

⁶⁶ Figures from Irving (1972), p.10.

⁶⁷ Jagan (1956), pp.250-251.

⁶⁸ See Ince (1974) for a thorough analysis of how the decolonization of British Guiana was played out at the United Nations. A Colonial Office file (CO 936 633) released since Ince's publication provide an insight into the British government's position.

which convened in October 1962, ended in deadlock. On the one hand, the PPP government favoured the first-past-the-post system, the voting age lowered to 18 and no elections before independence.⁶⁹ While on the other, the PNC and UF favoured proportional representation, the maintenance of the voting age at 21 and new elections before independence. It should be observed that it was during these discussions on independence that the Venezuelan government, in November 1962, reopened the dispute over Essequibo which had been settled in an 1899 tribunal award. This has raised questions about the timing and whether there was any link with the US's actions against Jagan.⁷⁰ The failure of the British Guiana parties to agree on their dividing issues before the convening of a third independence constitution conference in October 1963, resulted in the colonial secretary, Duncan Sandys, having to resolve the deadlock. Proportional representation was introduced, the voting age remained at 21 and fresh elections were to be held once independence was granted.⁷¹ In effect, all of the demands of Burnham's PNC and the UF were met and none of Jagan's PPP.

Arthur J. Schlesinger, a former aide to John F. Kennedy, reveals in his book that the US president was determined to prevent another Cuba. Kennedy's fears about Jagan were aroused following a visit by the latter to Washington in search of aid in October 1961, during which time he met Kennedy.⁷² Burnham, as Schlesinger reveals, was the preferred leader since he was not only the favoured leader of the AFL-CIO, but he had also impressed Washington:

⁶⁹ Command Paper 1870.

⁷⁰ These issues will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

⁷¹ Command Paper 1870.

⁷² Schlesinger (1965), pp.710-712.

"Burnham's visit left the feeling as I reported to the President, that 'an independent British Guiana under Burnham (if Burnham will commit himself to a multi-racial policy) would cause us many fewer problems than an independent British Guiana under Jagan'."⁷³

The official reason given by the colonial secretary that proportional representation was implemented to "...prevent the development of party politics along racial lines", was influenced by Washington DC.⁷⁴ Schlesinger reveals that proportional representation was thought by Washington to be the best way of ensuring Burnham's success at the polls, since "Jagan's parliamentary strength was larger than his popular strength..."⁷⁵ The granting of independence had been preceded by a series of disturbances, which appeared to be about labour-related issues, but which were part of a concerted effort by both internal and external elements to remove Jagan from power.

The introduction by the PPP government of the Kaldor Budget, named after the Cambridge economist who designed it in 1962, served as the catalyst for a spate of violence that culminated in what became known as "Black Friday" on 16 February. The budget drew protests because of the introduction of a compulsory savings scheme. Five people lost their lives and scores more were injured, and millions of dollars in damage was caused to business properties in Georgetown.⁷⁶ With the local police unable to control the rioting mobs, British troops were called into British Guiana once again; this time, unlike 1953, to be confronted with civil disturbance.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid., p.713.

⁷⁴ Command Paper 2203, p.4. The release of US State Department Records in the 1990s has confirmed Schlesinger's memoirs on the Kennedy administration's determination to prevent Jagan from leading British Guiana to independence and the subsequent electoral manipulation. See Joseph (1998), especially pp.30-33.

⁷⁵ Schlesinger (1965), p.713. See Also Henfrey in de Kadt (1972), pp.70-71, on a *New York Times*' report alleging Washington's involvement in the introduction of proportional representation.

⁷⁶ See Colonial Office No. 354 on the various groups against the budget.

⁷⁷ Newman (1964), p.95; and Colonial Office No.354.

Premdas asserts that the real reason for the 1962 disturbances was to overthrow the PPP government. He argues, "One way to do this would be to create enough disturbances in Guyana to prove that the PPP could not govern the country and that an independent Guyana under Jagan would be highly unstable."⁷⁸ Indeed, Premdas notes that the UF had already launched an anti-communist campaign against the Jagan government during the 1961 elections. Ample evidence exists that the 1962 disturbances were propelled by more than the political rivalries of the opposition and had the intention of toppling the Jagan government.⁷⁹ Philip Agee, a former CIA agent, points to the involvement of that organization in supporting the anti-Jagan unions: "The Georgetown station operations for several years have concentrated on building up the local anti-Jagan trade union movement, mainly through the Public Service International..."⁸⁰ Moreover, as Agee states, "Last year through the PSI the Georgetown station financed an anti-Jagan campaign over the Budget that included riots and a general strike and precipitated British intervention to restore order."⁸¹ The involvement of American forces, both official and unofficial, in pre-independence British Guiana becomes even more evident in 1963 and 1964.

The PPP government attempted to re-introduce the Labour Relations bill in March 1963, the same bill which had precipitated the 1953 constitutional crisis. It was confronted by a general strike lasting eighty days. Once again, the indications are that

⁷⁸ Premdas in *Caribbean Quarterly* (1979), p.29. See also Jagan (1966), pp.282-249, who asserts the same claim.

⁷⁹ See Singh (1988), p.38, who provides a list of sources on CIA involvement in attempts to overthrow Jagan from 1962.

⁸⁰ Agee (1963), p.293. The PSI is described by Agee, p.618, as "the international trade secretariat for government employees used by the CIA for labour operations".

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.293-294. See also Singh (1988), p.38.

the disruptions were intended to topple Jagan's government. Nath notes that the Labour Relations bill had actually lapsed since 22 May, but the general strike continued until 6 July 1963. Jagan also concluded that the various forces involved in the anti-bill campaign, including the TUC, opposition parties, CIA, businesses and the press "...soon felt, after publication of the bill that the time had come to bring down my government."⁸² While Jagan's allegations may have been dismissed at the time, subsequent evidence supports his claims. Agee states that the CIA financed the 1963 general strike. Moreover, in his diary-styled memoirs, he notes, "Visitors here [Quito] who have also been to the Georgetown station say eventually the Agency hopes to move the leader of the Black community into power even though blacks are outnumbered by Jagan and the Indians."⁸³ Serafino Romualdi, the former US Labour ambassador, states in his book that he played a "minor" role in the general strike. He notes, "His [Burnham's victory] was cause for widespread rejoicing, especially in trade union circles in the United States where Burnham had won friendship and respect."⁸⁴

While British Guiana was caught up as a pawn in the cold war during 1963 the cost in terms of the state's ethnic relations was high. Milne (1981) notes that the violence unleashed during the general strike was overtly racist. Further disturbances came in 1964 when an inter-union dispute in the sugar industry served to ignite the troubles.⁸⁵ Most writers on the outbreak of violence agree that the underlying cause was not the

⁸² Jagan (1966), p.272.

⁸³ Agee (1963), p.294. See also Henfrey in de Kadt, (1972), on CIA involvement.

⁸⁴ Romualdi (1967), p.352.

⁸⁵ Burrowes (1984), pp.190-192.

union strike *per se*, but rather PPP opposition to the introduction of proportional representation for elections due in 1964.⁸⁶

Elections under the new proportional representation system were held in December 1964. The PPP emerged with a majority of the votes, but it was not enough to secure an overall majority.⁸⁷ The formation of a coalition after the elections by the PNC and the UF gave the opposition the majority needed to form the government that would lead British Guiana to independence. With the PNC/UF coalition in government, a final independence constitution conference was held in November 1965, the key issue being to fix the date upon which independence would be granted. It was boycotted by the PPP on the grounds that the introduction of proportional representation in 1963 was unacceptable, a state of emergency existed in British Guiana and people were still being held in detention.⁸⁸ Independence was granted on 26 May 1966. Burnham later ditched his coalition UF partner, just prior to elections in December 1968. He continued in power until his death in 1985. The PNC party remained in office under Desmond Hoyte until 1992, when it was replaced in government by Cheddi Jagan and his PPP party. Despite Burnham's links with the US, once in full control, he declared Guyana the world's first cooperative republic on 23 February 1970 and turned increasingly to radical third world and socialist leanings on the international stage. As US Senator Bartlow Martin has argued, "Although Burnham in power has gone further left and become far more anti-American in his speeches than we had expected when we chose him over

⁸⁶ See, for instance, *ibid.*, p. 188; Lutchman (1974), pp.229-230; and Milne (1981), pp.23-24.

⁸⁷ The results of the 1964 election were PPP 45.8% of votes winning 20 seats; PNC 40.5% winning 22 seats; and the UF 12.4% winning 7 seats, Command Paper 2849, p.6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Jagan, we are stuck with him. No real alternative is in sight."⁸⁹ In effect, this meant Burnham had some degree of manoeuvrability vis-à-vis Washington.

Interpretations of Guyana's Foreign Policy from 1966-1992

The foreign policy of Guyana, 1966-1992, has received little academic attention and there is no major study at all of the foreign policy of Desmond Hoyte's administration, 1985-1992. This thesis aims to fill a gap in the literature on Guyana's foreign policy by analysing the international approaches of the government to the Guyana-Venezuela controversy.

The foreign policy of the coalition government, from independence to 1969 approximately, has been described as being pro-western: that is, in terms of the orientation of diplomatic, trade and aid links established.⁹⁰ A noted exception is Ferguson (1999) who does not view this period as being pro-western, but argues instead that it represented the "Transition Years" as the government sought to build up its foreign policy immediately after independence. From 1970 to 1978, the Burnham government

⁸⁹ Bartlow Martin (1978), p.138. See also Gill in Manigat (1977b) who advances a similar argument. Bartlow Martin, op.cit., p.200, notes that the US did punish the Burnham government, for instance, by cutting development aid, when Guyana voted to equate Zionism with racism at the UN. See also Mars in *Transition* (1983) on claims that the US was destabilizing the Burnham government in the mid-1970s because of its socialist overtures.

⁹⁰ See Braveboy-Wagner in Ferris and Lincoln (1981); Brotherson Jr. in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1989); Danns (1988); Premdas in *World Affairs* (1982); and Garavini di Turno (1988). Danns (1988) describes the period 1965-1970 as the "Phase of Neo-Colonial Accommodation", and Ally (1993) designates 1966-1971 as the "Phase of Accommodation to the United States".

adopted a leftist and radical third world stance on the international stage.⁹¹ As the state became gripped in economic problems, the Burnham administration's foreign policy has been perceived as turning back to the west and pro-capitalist.⁹² Fauriol's early study based on his PhD, forsakes thorough analyses of the foreign policies of Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica, for meticulous observation of encoding and classifying foreign policy "events data" according to the CREON formula.⁹³ Although recognizing the Guyana-Venezuela controversy as the prime security concern for the government of Guyana from 1966-1970, Fauriol made the erroneous forecast that the controversy was no longer an issue following the signing of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain in 1970. Indeed, shortly after his work was published, the controversy once again assumed centre-stage in Guyana's foreign policy. In providing an analysis of the management of Guyana's political economy, Ferguson includes substantial chapters on the state's foreign policy between 1966 and 1985.⁹⁴ His work is rich in information on Guyana's pursuit of relations with the socialist world, the Caribbean, the USA, African liberation struggles, as well as pointing to the salience of the Guyana-Venezuela controversy in foreign policy emanating from Georgetown. His declared attempt to correct "the mantra of 'twenty-eight wasted years'", a slogan adopted by the PPP in reference to the dire state of Guyana

⁹¹ The exact years and labels have slight variations amongst the writers, but essentially the key point for all is that there was a swing to the left in the foreign policy orientation. Garavini di Turno has labelled the period, 1970-1978 as the "Giro a la Izquierda" or turn to the left; Premdas, 1969-1971 as "Burnham Turns Socialist Again". For Ally, 1970-1976 represents the "Phase of Non-Alignment and Socialist Orientation", while Ferguson (1999) categorizes the period, 1970-1978, as "The Radicalization of Foreign Policy".

⁹² Garavini di Turno labels the period, 1977-1983 as "No Alineamiento Pragmático" and Ferguson labels the period 1979-1985, "Foreign Policy in Context of Persistent Crisis", as the state battled with domestic and international problems.

⁹³ Fauriol (1981). CREON is the Comparative Research on the Events of Nations.

⁹⁴ Ferguson (1999), pp.95-132, 242-289, 369-415.

following the PNC government, is replaced by the implication that everything Burnham did was correct while everything the opposition leader, Cheddi Jagan, did was wrong. What could have been an informative analysis of part of Guyana's foreign policy, reads like a justification for Burnham's policies.

Garavini di Turno's study, based on his PhD, is perhaps the most comprehensive publication, covering the period 1966-1983. He also includes a brief postscript on the foreign policy of the last two years of the Burnham government and that of Hugh Desmond Hoyte. Garavini di Turno identifies two significant influences on the foreign policy of the 1966-1985 period: the leftist orientation of Burnham and Venezuela's claim to Essequibo. He argues that the interaction between these two facets accounts significantly for the "peculiar oscillations" and changes between left and right in Guyana's foreign policy under Burnham.⁹⁵ Garavini di Turno acknowledges that for the government in Guyana diplomacy represented its principal means of defence.⁹⁶ As his study is concerned with the overall shifts in foreign policy, he does not focus fully on the international strategies employed by the Burnham administration with regard to the controversy, recognising only that relations with the USA and Brazil in particular were altered according to the level of pressure exerted by Venezuela in relation to its claim on Essequibo.

A number of minor studies have looked at particular aspects or themes in Guyana's foreign policy, especially relating to the Burnham era, but none have focussed on the Guyanese government's use of its foreign policy as a defence mechanism in

⁹⁵ Garavini di Turno (1988), p.21-23.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.22.

response to Venezuela's claims to Essequibo. Enloe (1976b) examines Guyana's decision in the early 1970s to develop relations with China. She argues that the issue of trade, aid and identity were important in the government's decision as well as the manoeuvrability facilitated by the US's rapprochement with China. Gill (1977), mimeo., explored the factors behind Guyana's decision in 1972, along with three other Commonwealth Caribbean states, to give diplomatic recognition to Cuba in defiance of Havana's hemispheric ostracization. The same writer also explored the impact of domestic left-wing political competition on the opening up of relations with the Communist world.⁹⁷ The salience of the Commonwealth Caribbean in Guyana's foreign policy has been explored in Luard's master's degree thesis.⁹⁸ Some aspects of the domestic and external linkages of foreign policy have been analysed. For example, the relationship between the change in Guyana's domestic ideology (as the government declared the state a cooperative republic in 1970) and the impact on foreign policy, has been examined by Premdas.⁹⁹ Danns looks at the domestic and international factors shaping Guyana's foreign policy. He concludes that Guyana does not have the resources to support its ideology and non-aligned foreign policy.¹⁰⁰ The foreign policies of Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago have been compared by Ince, who also analyses the issues of lack of information and non-consultation in the foreign policy-making of both states.¹⁰¹ The role of race in foreign policy, particularly regarding the East Indian population, which during the Burnham era was largely allied with the opposition PPP, has been explored by Ince

⁹⁷ Gill in Manigat (1977b).

⁹⁸ Luard (1979), mimeo.

⁹⁹ Premdas in *World Affairs* (1982).

¹⁰⁰ Danns (1988), mimeo., p.42.

¹⁰¹ Ince in Bryan (1979c) and Ince in *International Journal* (1979), respectively.

who notes that while race was of influence in the government's foreign policy, third worldist ideology was of more importance.¹⁰² Searwar's paper (1989) develops this theme of the role of race in Guyana's foreign policy by linking it with that state's international lobbying on the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy. He argues that the presence of an East Indian population allowed the government to foster an Afro-Asian identity on the international stage, thereby mobilising Afro-Asian support for Guyana's territorial integrity. In this regard, Searwar argues that the development of diplomatic links with India, which occupied a major leadership position in the Third World, was important.

The foreign policy of the Burnham years, especially from 1970 to 1985, has been the subject of significant debate. This period witnessed the expansion of Guyana's diplomatic relations to include Havana and other parts of the socialist world. There was also a very active approach to Third World issues, such as calls for a New International Economic Order at the UN and support for African liberation struggles.¹⁰³ The government also became actively engaged in the NAM and South-South co-operation issues. Some writers have interpreted Burnham's foreign policy as being the means by which his government sought to consolidate and/or legitimise power. A senior PPP figure, Moses Nagamootoo, has stated, "...the Venezuelan threat, whether by design or accident, was a blessing."¹⁰⁴ This is because in Nagamootoo's view, the renewed tensions with Venezuela in the 1981/1982 period allowed the PNC government to divert attention from its domestic problems, while improving the government's image as it lobbied

¹⁰² Ince in Bryan (1979b).

¹⁰³ See Burnham (1975a), (1980a) and (1981b).

¹⁰⁴ *Thunder*, July-Sept. (1982), p.32.

internationally for support. On the domestic stage, Spinner Jr. argues that the Burnham government utilized the tensions with Venezuela in 1981/1982 to divert attention from domestic problems by calling on the populace to unite against Caracas.¹⁰⁵ Premdas in examining Burnham's ideological positioning for a period of more than thirty years, starting in 1950, notes the shifts in Burnham's ideology. He suggests that, "The cause that best explains the back-and-forth ideological changes in President Burnham's policy orientations over the last thirty years...is the need to acquire, consolidate, and perpetuate power."¹⁰⁶ That is to say, Burnham adjusted his ideology and foreign policy as domestic and international changes dictated in order to achieve and maintain power. Premdas touches briefly on what he describes as the "Machiavellian impulse" of Burnham in his desire to consolidate his power position.¹⁰⁷ Brotherson Jr. expands on this theme, arguing that foreign policy from 1970-1985 was a "Machiavellian" search for legitimacy:

"This image of Guyana as a well-intentioned, principled loyalist of the NAM cause, made to suffer for its loyalty, is a flawed one. The country's foreign policy was not crafted over the years to serve objective national interests. Rather, the overriding objective of Guyana's authoritarian leadership was to do abroad what it had failed to do at home, i.e. to establish legitimacy. With this approach, the late President Burnham sought to follow the strategy outlined by Niccoló Machiavelli, namely, to legitimise one's regime by means of glorious foreign adventure or diplomatic fervour on the one hand and stifle domestic opposition on the other, wringing grudging support from the latter in the process."¹⁰⁸

Brotherson Jr. advanced his contention even more starkly in a newspaper article: "...the single most important determinant of the Burnham foreign policy was the compulsion to

¹⁰⁵ Spinner Jr. in *Caribbean Review* (1982), p.30.

¹⁰⁶ Those changes are described as follows: "1950-63 socialist; 1964-68, capitalist/mixed economy; 1969-77, socialist; 1978-present, capitalist/mixed economy", Premdas in *World Affairs*, p.178.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Brotherson Jr., op.cit., pp.9-10.

win abroad what the government could not win at home - legitimacy."¹⁰⁹ De Caires makes a similar point by arguing that the incidences of electoral manipulation drew the government to the international stage as a legitimising forum. He notes:

"It cannot have been other than extremely unpleasant for the more sensitive PNC leaders to live with the electoral situation since 1968 despite the realpolitik justification. It is this single fact that has tended to make the party as a whole but particularly its leaders politically sensitive and aggressive and prone to foreign policy initiative and with grandstanding."¹¹⁰

De Caires characterizes the Burnham government as being sensitive to its domestic illegitimacy, and so desirous of legitimacy on the world stage, whereas Brotherson Jr. suggests a more cold-blooded calculation on the part of that government. Nevertheless, the equation of lack of domestic legitimacy leading to a search for authentication on the international stage is found in the arguments advanced by both writers. Other interpretations about the Burnham government's use of foreign policy have been advanced. Gill, for instance, argues that it was used to enhance power, while Ally concludes that it was used to boost the party's image.¹¹¹ Irrespective of whether the use of foreign policy is termed "Machiavellian" or image enhancing, the underlying argument remains the same: foreign policy became a vehicle through which the Burnham government could gain credibility.

The word "Machiavellian" has entered English as a term depicting political abuse and cunningness. It is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as follows: "1. of or relating to the alleged political principles of Machiavelli; cunning, amoral and

¹⁰⁹ Brotherson Jr. in *Caribbean Contact*, June 1989, p.6.

¹¹⁰ De Caires in *Caribbean Affairs* (1988), p.197.

¹¹¹ Gill in Manigat (1977b), pp.349-351; and Ally, op.cit., p.159.

opportunist. 2. a cunning, amoral and opportunist person especially a politician."¹¹² The term is based on Niccoló Machiavelli's sixteenth century study, "The Prince", in which he advises the Medici dynasty on consolidating power by uniting the various states comprising the Italian peninsula. Machiavelli uses the imagery of the fox and the lion to portray the realist prince as one who uses both cunning and strength while being concerned solely with maintaining his position rather than being restrained by moral judgments.¹¹³ He argues, "Hence it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use his knowledge or not to use it according to necessity."¹¹⁴ Suggesting that the acquisition and consolidation of power is more important than the means by which it is achieved, Machiavelli states:

"...in the actions of all men, and especially princes, where there is no impartial arbiter, one must consider the final result. Let a prince therefore act to conquer and to maintain the state; his methods will be always be judged honourable and will be praised by all; for ordinary people are always deceived by appearances and by the outcome of a thing..."¹¹⁵

In recommending how a prince should act to acquire esteem, Machiavelli points to the importance of major foreign campaigns: "Nothing makes a prince more esteemed than great undertakings and examples of his unusual talents."¹¹⁶ He cites, the king of Spain, Ferdinand of Aragon, who kept his subjects in awe with his successful overseas campaigns while using the opportunity provided by such diversions to consolidate power on the domestic stage without being noticed.¹¹⁷ From this it may be deduced that Machiavelli was not concerned with legitimising power, as Brotherson Jr. suggests.

¹¹² (1994), p.934.

¹¹³ Machiavelli (1998), pp.58-59.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.52.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.60.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.73.

Rather, as Premdas implies more accurately, Machiavelli's focus is on the acquisition of power and the use of foreign military adventure in a two-fold way: to keep the domestic populace in amazement while at the same time using the opportunity this presents to consolidate domestic power.

It remains to be questioned whether the Burnham government used international adventure to consolidate power and divert attention from domestic problems. Brotherson Jr. has contended that the principal international vehicle within which the Burnham government pursued the goal of legitimacy was the NAM: "The tenets and principles of non-alignment seemed tailor-made for Burnham. The movement was a stage set which gave ear, voice, access and potential leadership prominence to leaders of poor states, allowing them to speak to the world stage."¹¹⁸ A similar argument has been expressed by Manley, who states that the southern environment, namely the NAM, was a source of legitimacy for the Burnham government.¹¹⁹ Burnham's involvement in that international body is well-documented, and Searwar has suggested that Burnham's activities in the NAM, especially in the formulation of cooperative arrangements amongst member states, makes him an architect of the movement.¹²⁰ This is questionable but the PNC government under Burnham was very active in its membership of international fora.

If we consider the allegations and documented cases of electoral fraud in Guyana during elections between 1968 and 1985 under the PNC government, it is apparent that the legitimacy of the government was in question. Bartlow Martin argues that Burnham

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.73-74.

¹¹⁸ Brotherson Jr. in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1989), p.22.

¹¹⁹ Manley (1975), p.1. See also Manley's thesis (1975), p.112.

¹²⁰ Searwar in Dolphin (1985), p.57.

was turning Guyana "...into a repressive one-party state".¹²¹ Brotherson Jr. bases his argument on the authoritarian nature of Burnham's government and his retention of power as a result of rigged elections since 1968.¹²² In this regard, it should be noted that Jagan's PPP party maintained that the US had brought the PNC to power through electoral manipulation and continued its support of the Burnham government despite continued electoral malpractices in order to prevent a PPP government.¹²³

A number of other factors about the Burnham leadership support the arguments about the relationship between Guyana's foreign policy and the Burnham administration's consolidation of power. The "paramountcy of the party" doctrine placed the party above the government, thereby ensuring the PNC's pre-eminence in the state.¹²⁴ According to Burnham, "It was...decided that the Party should assume unapologetically its paramountcy over the Government which is merely one of its executive arms".¹²⁵ Not surprisingly, this policy has been equated with a dictatorship of the PNC.¹²⁶ Labour was controlled by the administration as the commanding heights of the economy were nationalized: the foreign-owned sugar and bauxite industries, namely Alcan Bauxite Company (1971); Reynolds Aluminum and Jessel (1975); and Booker (1976).¹²⁷ Danne's

¹²¹ Bartlow Martin (1978), p.136. A number of other publications describe the repeated electoral fraud of the Burnham government. These include: "Virtual Army Coup Keeps PNC in power" in *Thunder*, January-March 1981 and Jagan (1973) on the use of the military and other electoral malpractices in the 1973 elections; and Avebury in *Caribbean Review* (1981) on electoral fraud in 1980.

¹²² Brotherson Jr., op.cit., p.10.

¹²³ Jagan (1984), p.227-228. His arguments are consistent with those of Bartlow Martin (1978), and Gill in Manigat (1977b) discussed earlier.

¹²⁴ Latin America Bureau (1984), pp.53-58.

¹²⁵ Burnham (1974), p.11. See also Burnham (1975b).

¹²⁶ Thomas in Payne and Sutton (1984a), p.92 and Thomas in Ambursely and Cohen (1983), p.32.

¹²⁷ Ince in Millett and Will (1979), p.169. Thomas in Payne and Sutton (1984a), pp.91-93, argues that the nationalizations amounted to 'mortgage finance' since the Burnham government paid commercial rates for the companies nationalized as opposed to expropriating them. Meanwhile, Payne (1984), p.12, argues that it was not the Burnham government's intention to nationalize the bauxite industry, but that it was forced

study on domination and power during the Burnham era notes that the civil service bureaucracy was controlled by the government through sackings, promotions, patronage and by making it accountable to the PNC party executive. The impartiality of the bureaucracy was also eroded as the separation between party and state became blurred with a mandatory requirement for public servants to attend political rallies. The Burnham government limited dissent in the society through its ownership and control of the radio and national newspapers. While editorial authority could not be exercised on the opposition and other press, these were controlled by means of other tactics, e.g. restricting import licences for newsprint.¹²⁸

Burnham took on the role of executive president with extensive powers in 1980, following a constitutional change instigated by his government.¹²⁹ The background to this is mired in controversy, with the government accused of using electoral manipulation to secure the requisite votes in the 1978 referendum on constitutional changes.¹³⁰ Electoral fraud is also documented in the December 1980 elections. The human rights record of this administration was repeatedly in question by both domestic and overseas groups. The regime lost any residual international credibility with the killing in June 1980 of the historian and politician Walter Rodney, in which it was implicated.¹³¹ Two years earlier, the government had attracted negative publicity for its support of Jim Jones

into that corner after the foreign-owned companies refused to enter into the partnership called for by the government.

¹²⁸ Danns (1982), pp.75-80.

¹²⁹ Lutchman in *Transition* (1982) and Danns (1982), pp.179-180, provide details of the powers conferred in the 1980 constitution which placed Burnham effectively above the law and unaccountable to parliament. Spinner Jr. in *Caribbean Review* (1980) labels Burnham "Emperor" in view of the powers conferred by the 1980 constitution.

¹³⁰ See Avebury in *Caribbean Review* (1981) based on the report, "Something to Remember", submitted by a team of international observers; and *Thunder*, April-June 1978, pp.1-16.

¹³¹ Spinner Jr., op.cit., p.8.

who had been allowed to establish the "People's Temple" cult in the Guyanese interior. The cult ended in the mass suicide and killings in November 1978 that has become known as "Jonestown".¹³² The Burnham regime's close association with another cult, the "Jewish" "House of Israel", led by a fugitive American, David Hill, was also a cause for concern domestically and internationally.¹³³ The cult was implicated in the killing of a Jesuit priest who worked as a photographer for the *Catholic Standard*, and other acts of politically motivated aggression on behalf of the Burnham regime.¹³⁴ Further, as Griffith summarises:

"...the reality in Guyana during most of the early post-independence years was one in which government dominance of the media, currency controls, restriction on press imports, and judicial decisions combined to create an environment in which these freedoms were curtailed rather than permitted or encouraged. Not only did this suppress political debate, but it also affected the exercise of several contingent freedoms - the rights of association and assembly and the right to demonstrate for redress of grievance, among other things."¹³⁵

Such a repressive atmosphere had emerged after the Burnham government ousted its right-wing coalition partner in 1968. Shortly afterwards, on 23 February 1970, the state was declared the world's first cooperative republic, thereby allowing Burnham to develop his own brand of socialism.¹³⁶

Thomas has argued that Burnham established an authoritarian state which was the antithesis of socialism.¹³⁷ Ferguson, in what seems to be an apology for the Burnham regime, argues that the move towards authoritarian politics was a response to radical

¹³² *ibid.*, pp.7-8; and Latin America Bureau (1984), pp.77-78, 96-98.

¹³³ Latin America Bureau (1984), pp.98-100.

¹³⁴ Spinner Jr., *op.cit.*, p.8.

¹³⁵ Griffith in Griffith and Sedoc-Dahlberg (1997), p.164. Bartlow Martin (1978), p.136, advances a similar argument. See also *Catholic Standard*, 21 February 1982, pp.1, 4, which documents the police shootings, arbitrary arrests and restrictions on the press and freedom of assembly in Guyana.

¹³⁶ See Lutchman in *Caribbean Studies* (1970) on Guyana's transformation into a cooperative republic.

¹³⁷ Thomas (1984b), pp.88 and Thomas in Fitzroy and Ambursley (1983), p.46.

polarisation and that Burnham's authoritarianism had the support of a range of interest groups until the late 1970s. He contends that it was only when those interest groups began to be threatened that there were calls for democracy.¹³⁸ A number of studies have pointed to the process of militarization - increases in military and paramilitary forces - in Guyana from the mid-1970s. Danns provides details of the PNC regime's effective control of three military and paramilitary groups, and the police, largely staffed by the African-descended segments of the population, which had two aims: preventing a coup d'etat and dissent in civil society against the government.¹³⁹ Griffith has argued that militarization was one of the means by which power was maintained,¹⁴⁰ while the Latin America Bureau argues that the Burnham government used the existence of the territorial controversy as the excuse for militarization.¹⁴¹ It is interesting to observe that support for the Burnham regime in particular was also maintained on the basis of racial ties with the African population. A patron-client relationship, established by the regime, co-opted the East Indian pro-capitalist leaders, amongst others.¹⁴² If note is taken of the severe economic problems confronting Guyana from the mid-1970s with the resulting shortages

¹³⁸ Ferguson (1999), p.418.

¹³⁹ Danns (1982), pp.143-170.

¹⁴⁰ Griffith (1993), p.62. See also the following writers on the phenomenon of militarization and civilian control of the military in Guyana and the Caribbean: Danns in *Transition* (1978) and (1982); Hintzen and Premdas in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1982); Paget and Stone (1983); Phillips and Young in Young and Phillips (1986). Note however, that in 1981, at least, Burnham explained the need to strengthen the military and paramilitary forces as a response to the Venezuelan threat, Burnham (1981a), p.32.

¹⁴¹ Latin America Bureau, op.cit., p.95. See also Danns in Young and Phillips (1986).

¹⁴² Hintzen in *Comparative Political Studies*.

of essential foods and a decline in living standards, the argument that the Burnham government may have required an external diversion becomes more pertinent.¹⁴³

Foreign Policy as a Multifaceted Field

It is the contention in this thesis that the arguments about foreign policy in Guyana during the Burnham era being aimed solely at securing legitimacy or consolidating domestic power represent a simplistic interpretation for two reasons and despite the apparent causal link between the domestic difficulties confronting the government and its unambiguous love of the international stage. Firstly, such premises fail to take into serious consideration the real threat to Guyana's national security as a result of the claim to more than five-eighths of its territory by the more powerful western neighbour, Venezuela. Secondly, at certain times the Venezuelan government pursued its claim in practical and active form, thereby requiring genuine defensive action from its Guyanese counterpart.

Since foreign policy was the only means by which the government of Guyana could effectively defend the threats to the state's territorial integrity and its national security from the more powerful Venezuela, this use of foreign policy is worthy of academic enquiry. The use of foreign policy as a defence mechanism emerged in the immediate post-independence period as the key strategy in the government of Guyana's approach to dealing with Venezuela's claims to a substantial portion of its territory. This

¹⁴³ See Thomas in Payne and Sutton (1984a) on Guyana's economic problems and an analysis of the causes. See also *Caribbean Contact* (especially August 1979, August 1982, October 1982, February 1983 and June 1984) on the political, economic and societal deterioration which was accompanied by Burnham's firm grip on the reins of power, with the resulting domestic and international calls for the restoration of democracy and human rights.

strategy in response to the threats, real or perceived, has centred on publicising the problems on the international stage with a view to winning support from that community and in so doing, provide what it is hoped would be a deterrent to Venezuelan occupation of Essequibo. The international approaches emerged because: (a) Guyana is militarily and economically weaker than Venezuela, which made engaging the support of third parties a necessity for the former; (b) the failure of the Burnham government to secure a defence agreement with the departing colonial and/or regional power; (c) Burnham's confidence of winning the support of the Afro-Asian bloc, in particular, in international bodies.

Foreign policy is a multifaceted field.¹⁴⁴ As Rothstein argues: "Foreign policy rarely serves a single purpose. Goals tend to mingle together...sharp lines between the quest for security or aid, or trade, or status and prestige are frequently difficult to discern".¹⁴⁵ Puchala, who identifies five separate goals which any state would pursue in its foreign policy, cautions against seeking out single goals in any aspect of a state's foreign policy:

"Isolating goals and tracing their pursuits as discrete patterns of international behaviour were useful measures for general understandings. But they again were a substantial step away from international political reality, in which states simultaneously pursue multiple goals, and in which simple acts may have manifold ends."¹⁴⁶

This point is registered if we examine the goals which Puchala has identified - self preservation [of the state], security [creation of a threat free environment], prosperity, prestige and peace - and relate them to a state's foreign economic policy. The principle

¹⁴⁴ Kent in Kent and Nielsson (1980) uses this term in a different sense to indicate the fact that foreign policy is influenced by both domestic and systemic factors.

¹⁴⁵ Rothstein (1977), p.105.

goal here may be prosperity, but it is also possible to see how security, prestige, peace and self-preservation may be derived from successful execution of such a policy.

Weinstein's study of foreign policy in a developing country demonstrates the multiple uses to which foreign policy may be deployed: to isolate the opposition from their international allies; to lend legitimacy to internal political demands; to maximise the leadership's political skills and tools; to create symbols of nationalism and patriotism, buttressing calls for national unity under the leader; and to generate pride and self-respect.¹⁴⁷ From both Puchala and Weinstein's studies, it may be argued that foreign policy can have two sets of goals: those aimed at the state and those for political uses i.e. serving the government rather than the state. Either way, the core point is that foreign policy is a multifaceted field which renders single goal or use identification simplistic. In pursuing international action in relation to the controversy, the Guyanese government may, indeed, have gained a level of prestige which enhanced its status on the domestic stage. However, I shall argue that during times of heightened tensions with Venezuela, the principal goal of foreign policy was preservation of the state's territorial integrity. At other times, while this goal continued to be important, further features were brought to the fore in foreign policy: prestige enhancement for the regime and economic prosperity. The rise of the third world movement, which was facilitated by the détente of the 1970s, presented the government of Guyana with enhanced opportunities for its international approaches to the territorial controversy than existed in the earliest period of government. In the process, an increase in prestige at home and amongst its peers on the international stage was facilitated.

¹⁴⁶ Puchala (1981), pp.90-91.

The Guyanese administration's effective use of international fora on the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy has been recognized in academia and elsewhere. The use of international action by the government of Guyana to mobilise support is acknowledged by Braveboy-Wagner, but as her emphasis is on providing an overview of Commonwealth Caribbean foreign policy, the precise topic receives little analysis.¹⁴⁸ As we have noted, Ferguson also provides only a brief analysis of this aspect of Guyana's foreign policy.¹⁴⁹

I do not propose to advance an argument about Guyana's foreign policy being primarily about either territorial preservation or regime enhancing. In keeping with the conception of foreign policy as a multifaceted field, I argue that it would be more accurate to perceive that during periods of heightened tensions with Venezuela, preservation of Guyana's territorial integrity was the principal goal of foreign policy. At times of improved relations, this goal continued to be of importance to Georgetown, but other foreign policy goals became prominent: examples are prestige enhancement during parts of the Burnham era and economic prosperity under Hoyte. Here, it is interesting to note Searwar's argument: "Securing legitimacy was a factor, undoubtedly the case; but the security motivation especially isolating Venezuela internationally was the most significant factor."¹⁵⁰ On the one hundredth anniversary of the 1899 arbitration award which settled the nineteenth-century dispute, 3 October 1999, the Venezuelan president, Hugh Chávez Frías, declared: "No vamos a dejar dormir esa reivindicación. Seguiremos

¹⁴⁷ Weinstein in *World Politics* (1971-1972), pp.371-372.

¹⁴⁸ Braveboy-Wagner (1989); and in *Caribbean Affairs* (1988), pp.82-83.

¹⁴⁹ Ferguson (1999), pp.113, 260-266, 380-393. See also Latin America Bureau (1984), pp.94-96, for a brief discussion of Guyana's international action.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Lloyd Searwar, 8 December 1999.

reclamando y exigiendo nuestros derechos, como se lo he dicho a las autoridades de Guyana cada vez que he podido y ahora reitéramos'." ¹⁵¹

The focus of enquiry into the nineteenth century Anglo-Venezuelan territorial dispute and later the Guyana-Venezuelan territorial controversy has been largely historical in character and lacking in attention to the international strategies deployed by the government of Guyana in response to the controversy. Yet this is an issue which has engendered renewed debate in the domestic media in Georgetown and amongst opposition groups in the post-1992 period as the PPP government, which replaced the PNC, has shown a preference for bilateral rather than international approaches. ¹⁵² The factors behind the US's decision to confront Britain in the 1880s over the Anglo-Venezuelan dispute have been examined by a number of writers. Grenville and Young (1966), who describe the seeming threat of war as "an illusion of conflict", focus on the role of a former US diplomat and publicist for Venezuela in bringing Congress and the US government's attention to the dispute. Smith (1979) argues that it was the appointment of the US secretary of state, Richard Olney, that was the catalyst for that country's involvement and that Washington's decision to challenge HMG was based on its own interests in Latin America rather than a concern for Venezuela. This latter point was made earlier by LaFeber in *The American Historical Review* (1961) who argued that

¹⁵¹ MRE (2000b). The anniversary was marked by reports of Venezuelan border troop movements, and incursions into Guyanese airspace by Venezuelan military aircraft, *Stabroek News*, 8 October 1999, p.1, and *Guyana Review*, January and February 1999, p.35, respectively.

¹⁵² It is perceived by many observers in Georgetown that this change of tactic has been to the detriment of Guyana - interviews with Ronald Austin and Cedric Joseph, 8 December 1999; Anna Benjamin, 9 December 1999; Manzoor Nadir, 29 April 2000; and Rupert Roopnaraine, 10 May 2000. The debate has been led by two independent news publications: the *Stabroek News* and *Guyana Review*.

Britain's encroachments in Latin America in the nineteenth century was a cause of concern to Washington. Humphreys (1969), Rout (1971) and Kissler's thesis (1971) have focussed on the emergence of the dispute, and Almécija Bermúdez (1987) studies the same theme from the perspective of British imperial strategy against a weak Venezuela in the nineteenth century. The role of the explorer, Robert Schomburgk, whose nineteenth century explorations and frontier lines continue to be a source of dispute, has been studied by Ojer (1969), while Bernardo Nuñez (1967) examines key moments in the evolution of the Anglo-Venezuelan dispute: the Yuruan incident, Cleveland and the Monroe Doctrine. Perkins (1937) examines the influence on the Monroe Doctrine's evolution as a result of the collision between the British and US governments over the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute. This is contrasted by Marshall's study (1992) which focuses on the role of the press in Britain and the US in shaping public opinion and influencing both governments. The result being a move from the initial threat of war to the birth of an Anglo-American friendship following the US's involvement in the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute.

Analysis of Guyana's boundary disputes from the perspective of international law, including the one over Essequibo, are offered by Benjamin (1975). An examination of the Dutch linguistic elements in the languages of Guyana's Amerindian population - part of the British case for prescriptive title as the successor colonial power to the Dutch - has been undertaken by Robertson.¹⁵³ Ely's conference paper (1997) looks at the repercussions within the Americas of the territorial dispute of the nineteenth century and the controversy of the twentieth century. He argues that the US' involvement in the

¹⁵³ Robertson in *Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe* (1983).

original dispute had repercussions for Canada while latterly the controversy has impacted on both Guyana and Venezuela's relations with Brazil as well as Venezuela's with Suriname, given its dispute with Guyana. Cases for and against the contents of Severo Mallet-Prevost's memorandum, which alleges foul-play in the 1899 tribunal award settling the dispute, have been presented by Dennis and Child, respectively, both in *The American Journal of International Law* (1950). Studies on Venezuela's reopening of the once-settled territorial dispute in 1962 are provided by Ince and Joseph.¹⁵⁴ Written in the immediate aftermath of the events analysed, they do not benefit from access to the documents of the relevant foreign ministries. Joseph's later work, based on documents released in the British and US foreign ministries is a significant step in bridging this gap. These documents facilitate to a certain extent Joseph's exploration of the relationship between the cold war, Guyana's domestic problems and the reopening of the dispute in 1962. His research does not include details of Burnham's role in signing the 1966 Geneva Agreement which has dictated the trajectory of relations to date between Guyana and Venezuela, and which was not welcomed by the opposition PPP in Guyana. I explore this important factor, arguing that the decision to sign the Geneva Agreement was the price Burnham was willing to pay for the prize of independence.

More recently, Valerino de Abreu (1997) makes an important contribution to furthering the understanding of the nineteenth century dispute through her analysis of recently released material in the British archives. Braveboy-Wagner's 1984 publication remains the most comprehensive study of this topic, covering the history, legal aspects

¹⁵⁴ Ince in *Caribbean Studies* (1970); and Joseph in *Caribbean Studies* (1970a, 1970b).

and developments from the nineteenth century up to the early 1980s.¹⁵⁵ Significant developments have taken place since 1982 which are worthy of study. The release of foreign ministry documents from the foreign ministry archives in London, Washington and elsewhere, has shed new light on the cold war machinations within which the once settled dispute was re-ignited. There are also new insights into Burnham and Eric Williams' roles in two significant developments in the controversy: the Geneva Agreement, 1966, and the Protocol to that document in 1970. In covering all the issues of relevance to both Guyana and Venezuela in the controversy and earlier dispute, Braveboy-Wagner's study does not provide an exhaustive analysis of the government of Guyana's response. This thesis offers fresh insights into the development of relations between Guyana and Venezuela in the early 1960s and 1970s based on an analysis of recently released documents from foreign ministries in London, Washington, Georgetown, Caracas and Port-of-Spain. An attempt is made to fill the existing gaps in the literature on Guyana's relations with Venezuela, both in relation to the controversy and more generally, through a study of published primary and secondary material. This has been supplemented extensively by interviews with key personnel, namely ministers and policy officials directly involved in the area under study.

I argue here that the Burnham government of Guyana was particularly careful not to solicit the support of the Eastern bloc and Cuba on a bilateral basis in the controversy despite growing links with these areas during the Burnham government in the 1970s and 1980s. This factor is a direct result of the government's cognizance of the strategic importance of the US in the controversy and hence the need not to take action that might

¹⁵⁵ Braveboy-Wagner (1984a).

push Washington into openly supporting Venezuela, given the effect this may have in emboldening Venezuelan action against Guyana. Such an awareness on the part of the government of Guyana is discerned, for instance, in its decision to take its case against Venezuela to the General Assembly and not to the Security Council of the United Nations. This is because calling for a resolution in the latter would have put the US in the position of having to make a choice between its economic interests in Venezuela and its support for Burnham, given that the opposition leader Cheddi Jagan was a Marxist.

The 1985 to 1992 period of Guyana's foreign policy under Hugh Desmond Hoyte's PNC administration has not been the subject of much academic enquiry. There is a consensus amongst the few writers of this era that foreign policy became more pragmatic in its orientation.¹⁵⁶ This perception has been formed on the basis of the refocusing of foreign policy which led to economic recovery and development being a priority in view of Guyana's dismal economic performance. One area of the new foreign policy has not received any analysis: the priorities accorded to different areas of the world under Hoyte's "concentric circles" theory of foreign policy. Given the relevance of this conceptualisation of foreign policy to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy, it is worth noting here. In 1986, Hoyte enunciated what he termed the "concentric circles" of his foreign policy, designating geographical regions in their order of importance to the government in Georgetown. He declared:

"Let us remind ourselves that our foreign policy has three concentric circles, as I like to think of it: first of all, cementing relations with our immediate neighbours - Venezuela, Brazil, Suriname and, of course, CARICOM; second, cementing relations with our hemispheric neighbours which would take in the Americas,

¹⁵⁶ See Danns (1988); and the postscript of Garavini di Turno (1988), p.457.

North and South, and those Antillean countries that are not part of CARICOM; and, third, cementing relations with the rest of the world."¹⁵⁷

This offers a clear indicator of the Hoyte regime's foreign policy, especially the perceived importance of various parts of the world to Guyana. For the first time, cementing relations with Guyana's immediate neighbours, rather than viewing such relations from a security perspective, was made a priority. Significantly, relations within the hemisphere became more important than those with states further afield, pointing to a rapprochement with the US after relations had deteriorated during the latter Burnham years.

It is posited in this thesis that Washington's endorsement of the Hoyte administration would, at least, have influenced Caracas' cordial engagement with Georgetown from 1985 to 1992, if not being, in part, the result of direct intervention by the US government. An examination of Guyana-Venezuela relations and the international approaches of the Hoyte administration offers an interesting contrast to the Burnham era. This is because the government's international lobbying continued, albeit in a more subtle manner, as relations between the two states improved. In this regard, I argue that the importance of personalities - namely the Guyanese president, Hoyte, and his Venezuelan counterparts, Jaime Lusinchi and Carlos Andrés Pérez were important factors cementing the growing ties. Bilateral and, in particular, secret diplomacy, between Caracas and Georgetown have been productive in advancing towards a solution during both the Burnham and Hoyte years. This is evident, for instance, in the following outcomes: (a) The Protocol to the Geneva Agreement, 1970; (b) The Hoyte-

¹⁵⁷ "The Economy: the diplomatic effort", Address at the opening of the Heads of Mission Conference at the Sophia Auditorium, Georgetown, on 11 July 1986 in Hoyte (1997), p.34.

Lusinchí/Hoyte-Andrés Pérez meetings which furthered talks and cooperation, the latter of which resulted in the UN Good Offices process.

In view of the ongoing controversy over Essequibo, as witnessed by the events surrounding the one hundredth anniversary on October 3, 1999 (discussed earlier), this thesis concludes by arguing that though south-south institutions, such as the NAM, have lost their influence, the most effective approach for the government of Guyana is the continued involvement of third parties, especially international bodies, given the country's weaknesses vis-à-vis Venezuela. The thesis argues that to simply dismiss foreign policy as serving internal political purposes or as being "Machiavellian" in character, as some writers have done, is to escape meaningful academic enquiry into a small state's effective use of multilateral diplomacy.

Sources

This thesis is based on an examination of primary and secondary documents in four countries. In Britain, research was conducted at the Public Record Office between June 1999 and March 2001 on newly released documents covering the crucial period of 1962-1968 when the once settled dispute was re-opened and given new life as a controversy. It should be noted that some key documents relating to the reopening of the territorial dispute in the 1960s have remained classified for extended periods, thereby preventing a full examination of the events that occurred. Research was also conducted at the British Library and Newspaper Library; and libraries within the University of London. Fieldwork in Georgetown, Washington DC, Port-of-Spain and Caracas was conducted from August 1999 to May 2000. The research in Guyana was particularly

difficult given the lack of an organized collection of material in any single research facility. As such, the research of primary documents (mainly government/opposition publications and newspapers) from the period under study involved the National, University of Guyana and Ministry of Foreign Affairs libraries, as well as the Newspaper Library. Some primary information was also gleaned from files at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Access was only possible by donning a breathing mask to investigate a wood-ants and dust-ridden heap (complete with a discarded truck tyre and frog) that has become the dumping ground for a number of foreign policy files.

Extensive interviews in Guyana with current/former diplomats and government ministers, a former president, academics and other observers on the territorial controversy were conducted to supplement documentary information collected and to get deeper insights into the government's policies. The incumbent minister of foreign affairs proved elusive, despite direct requests. Research was conducted in Caracas as a means of obtaining first-hand the Venezuelan perspective on the controversy. Primary research was conducted at the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores' archives. Crucially, Caracas served as an important location for obtaining primary material relating to Guyana's relations with Venezuela, much of which was not available in Georgetown because of the less sophisticated preservation of important government documents. It should be noted, however, that access was not obtained to the records of the Frontiers Department of the Venezuelan foreign ministry since these are held in the department concerned and not in the central ministerial archives where documents from the International Policy Department on Guyana-Venezuela relations are available. Interviews were conducted in Venezuela with two former presidents and former/current senior diplomatic personnel.

State Department files in the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington DC were triangulated with those released by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London in order to obtain a broad picture of events on the crucial period (1960s) in the evolution of the controversy. Port-of-Spain was an important research venue from two perspectives. Firstly, in obtaining primary material from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' archives relating to Eric Williams' involvement in a significant aspect in the history of the controversy: the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement, 1970, which led to a 12-year moratorium on the controversy. Secondly, the West Indiana Division of the library at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, and the library of the Institute of International Relations at the same campus, were useful repositories of published primary and secondary material.

It is hoped that this thesis will contribute towards the plea made by Sutton for more research on small states with the emphasis on "basic data collection [being] placed before theoretical speculation".¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Sutton in Clarke and Payne (1987), pp.23-24.

Chapter 2:
The Guyana-Venezuela Territorial Controversy

The Nineteenth Century Dispute

The state which became Guyana in 1966 was switched between competing colonial powers until finally ceding to Britain in the 1814 Treaty of London. In spite of such formal treaties acknowledging colonial expansion of one form or another, the exact territory was either not defined or at best, ill-defined. This was to be the source of the Anglo-Venezuelan territorial dispute which despite being settled by arbitration in 1899 continues in the form of a controversy today. In this chapter, I will look at the origins and settlement of the nineteenth century dispute, followed by its reopening in the early 1960s when Venezuela took the issue before the United Nations. The recommencement of the dispute will be of particular interest as it has since constituted arguably the most significant aspect of the relations between Guyana and Venezuela and hence it has informed the subject of this thesis. Moreover, the continued declassification of archival material from foreign ministries, especially in Britain and the United States, allows for a greater understanding than was previously possible. There is no attempt to analyse the validity of the arguments of any of the countries involved in the controversy.

The origins of the Anglo-Venezuelan dispute in the nineteenth century are to be found in the Spanish and Dutch expansion in the New World without the clear delineation of boundaries. Spain had claimed the whole of South America (excluding the Portuguese holding) as a result of the Papal Bull issued in 1493. Therein lies the original basis of Venezuela's claim to Essequibo:

"At the root of the whole case, as presented on behalf of Venezuela, there lies the contention that Spain, by virtue of the Papal Bull of 1493, or by virtue of the first discovery of America and the establishment of a settlement at Santo Tome,

became entitled to the whole territory lying between the Rivers Orinoco and Amazon and the Atlantic."¹

In 1648, however, Spain and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Munster at the end of the Thirty Years War. This treaty, which recognised the independence of the Netherlands, also gave recognition to its territories in the New World.² However, as was to become evident at the 1899 Tribunal, both Britain (as successor to Dutch territory) and Venezuela (as successor to Spanish possessions) had different interpretations of the meaning of this Treaty.³ At the 1899 Tribunal, Britain not only argued that the Treaty gave recognition to Dutch possessions, but "...as well as the places which they should thereafter acquire without infraction of the Treaty". Venezuela, on the other hand, has argued that in the Guiana area the treaty only gave recognition to Dutch holdings in what is called the Essequibo region, but that the area between the Essequibo and Orinoco rivers was Spanish territory.⁴ It is interesting to note Rout's argument that the Treaty of Munster merely gave recognition to territorial rights in the New World to Spain and the Netherlands: "...it did not specify what or where these holdings were".⁵ Moreover, as Bertram argues, "Boundaries had never been particularly defined under Spanish and Dutch ownership and the new possessors received the territories defined in the same indefinite way."⁶ Similarly, Humphreys has argued that at

¹ "British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. The Argument on behalf of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty", hereafter referred to as "The Argument", (1899), p.3.

² Rout (1971), pp.2-3.

³ The various British and Venezuelan presentations to the 1899 Award contain their respective positions. See also UN (1962a) for Venezuela's interpretations. For the British interpretation, see UN (1962b).

⁴ "British Guiana Boundary Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela. The Case on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty", (1899), p.13, hereafter referred to as the "The Case". Reiterated at the UN, UN (1962a), p.119.

⁵ Rout (1971), p.2.

⁶ Bertram (1992), pp.3-4.

the time of the 1814 Treaty of London - in which the colonies of Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo were ceded to Britain – the boundary with Spanish possessions was not defined.⁷

A key factor behind the failure to delineate boundaries lay in the limited knowledge of the territories, as colonial conquest expanded. This is evident in the fact that it was not until 1835 that the Prussian Richard Schomburgk was commissioned by the Royal Geographical Society of London to survey what by then was known as British Guiana. As Humphreys argues, "The sources of its [British Guiana's] great rivers and much of its physical geography were still unknown..."⁸ Earlier treaties had therefore been entered into over territories that were not known in their entirety.

The commissioning of Schomburgk to survey British Guiana in 1835 led to the official start of the dispute between Britain and Venezuela over part of the territory of British Guiana and consequently also of the name of the explorer becoming synonymous with this dispute.⁹ After completing his exploration for the Royal Geographical Society in 1835, Schomburgk was officially commissioned by the British Government "...to survey the boundaries of British Guiana."¹⁰ He had drawn a sketch map after his original exploration and this was later supplemented by a new map on the proposed boundary.¹¹ What exactly constitutes the true "Schomburgk Line" as the boundary drawn up has become known, continues to be one of the key issues of contention in the dispute-cum-

⁷ Humphreys (1969), p.189.

⁸ *ibid.*, p.190.

⁹ See for example, Ojer (1969) who has written an entire book on Schomburgk and his frontier lines. See also "The Case" (1899), pp.141-145, for Britain's account of the Schomburgk Line.

¹⁰ "The Case" (1899), p.18.

¹¹ Rout (1971), p.8

controversy as far as Venezuela is concerned. Indeed, as Valarino de Abreu states, the map completed after the exploration in 1835 "...came to be known to the Venezuelan government and scholars as the "Original Schomburgk line", which according to them gave approx. [sic] British Guiana 4920 km² of territory west of the Esequibo [sic] River..."¹²

Rout argues that the publication of Schomburgk's map in 1840 was the start of the dispute between Britain and Venezuela.¹³ A formal protest was entered against the 1840 map by the Venezuelan Minister to Britain, Alejo Fortique to Lord Aberdeen, British Foreign Secretary, in the same year of its publication. Later, in 1841, Fortique proposed instead a boundary treaty with Britain. He had laid claim to Essequibo river being the boundary while HMG's refuted this contention, instead subsequently offering a compromise boundary line at the Moroucca River which lies between the Orinoco and Essequibo rivers. A subsequent proposal on the boundary was made by Lord Aberdeen in 1841, but Caracas refused the compromise.¹⁴

Unable to agree on a compromise, Britain and Venezuela entered into what became known as the 1850 Agreement,¹⁵ under which the two contesting parties undertook not to occupy or violate the disputed area. However, what Benjamin terms "a

¹² Valarino de Abreu (1996), p.14. See Appendix 1 for a Venezuelan produced map showing Venezuela's interpretation of what constitutes the original and adjusted and Schomburgk's lines.

¹³ Rout (1971), p.8.

¹⁴ Ely (1997), p.4. See Appendix 1, "Linea de Lord Aberdeen".

¹⁵ The Agreement was ratified by Britain in June 1850 and by Venezuela in December 1850 - Rout (1971), p11. See also Almécija Bermúdez (1987), pp.40-41, for extracts of the formal exchanges of notes between Vicente Lecuna, Venezuelan Minister of External Affairs and Bedford H. Wilson, British Consul, Caracas that became known as the 1850 Agreement. Bernardo Núñez (1967) presents an account of Venezuela's protests against the Schomburgk map and Schomburgk's placement of markers during his survey. See chapter 1, "El doctor Fortique y Lord Aberdeen - La Carta Schomburgk (1841-1845)", pp.13-35. See also Rout (1971), pp.9-10 on the exchanges between Lord Aberdeen and the Venezuelan minister Alejo Fortique.

gentleman's agreement" over the disputed territory was soon to be ignored following the subsequent discoveries of gold in the 1860s and 1870s and the ensuing rush of prospectors from British Guiana to the disputed area.¹⁶ The gold discoveries in the Yuruari basin were extensive. Humphreys describes one of the gold mines in this area, El Callao, as being "...for a time one of the richest goldfields in the world...with more than 1, 000,000 ounces [of gold] extracted between 1860 and 1883."¹⁷ It is little wonder that tensions over such a mineral rich area would soon escalate with both sides issuing mining concessions to companies¹⁸ and with what Rout describes as "...the westward rush of Englishmen lured on by dreams of a 'second California'."¹⁹

Venezuela again sought to raise its claims in 1876.²⁰ This was followed by a new Venezuelan call for the settlement of the boundary line by agreement.²¹ Britain rejected Venezuela's proposal of 1876, but offered "...to settle the matter by mutual concession."²² HMG increased its stake to territory beyond the Schomburgk Line in 1880.²³ The following year, Venezuela made a new boundary proposal.²⁴ This proposal was rejected by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Granville, on 15 September 1881, who made his own proposal.²⁵ In 1886, Lord Rosebery as Foreign Secretary, in concurrence with Lord Granville, who had become Secretary of State for the Colonies, proposed that the territory between the 1881 boundary lines of Rojas and

¹⁶ Benjamin (1975), p.26

¹⁷ Humphreys (1969), pp.192-193.

¹⁸ Smith (1979), p.36

¹⁹ Rout (1971), p.12.

²⁰ See "The Case" (1899), p.136.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "The Case" (1899), p.127. See also Bernardo Nuñez (1967), pp.13-87, for details of the negotiations between Britain and Venezuela from 1841 to 1884.

²³ Bertram (1992), p.5.

²⁴ See "Linea de Rojas" of 21 April 1881 in Appendix 1.

Granville be considered as disputed. This was rejected by Venezuela which maintained its claim up to Essequibo river.²⁶ Valarino de Abreu citing Colonial Office and Foreign Office records, claims that as early as 1877 Lord Salisbury had announced what she refers to as "...another Schomburgk line allegedly unknown until then to the British..."²⁷ This new line moved British claims further west – 167, 830 km² west of the Essequibo river – and hence into the area of contention with Venezuela. Her thesis goes further by contending that the new line incorporated territory that was previously recognized as Venezuelan and therefore not in dispute.²⁸ Valarino de Abreu asserts that the maximum British claims had reached 203, 310 km² after 1887.²⁹

Some writers have interpreted Britain's expansion of territory in the disputed area as being part of its imperialistic manoeuvres at the time. Almécija Bermúdez, asserts, "...los problemas económicos afrontados por la Guayana Británica, durante las décadas de 1850 y 1880, fueron tan graves que permitieron ver en el oro descubierto en Venezuela la alternativa salvadora."³⁰ Such an interpretation may be plausible given that the late nineteenth century saw the height of the European powers' colonial expansion or "Scramble for Africa", as it is known with reference to Africa. However, it is worth noting that Humphreys offers the alternative explanation that the map prepared in 1886 was the "true" Schomburgk line and that previous maps were based on Schomburgk's

²⁵ "The Case" (1899), p.128. See "Linea de Lord Granville" in Appendix 1.

²⁶ "The Case" (1899) p.131. See "Linea de Lord Rosebery" in Appendix 1.

²⁷ Valarino de Abreu op.cit., p.16.

²⁸ Ibid., based on an examination of PRO files CO 700, BG no.34, 35 and FO 925 states in a footnote the argument that Britain had penciled in new lines on a map to extend its claims to territory between 1875 and 1866 – Footnote 35, p.16. This argument is amongst those put forward officially by Venezuela against the 1899 Award. See "Report on the Boundary Question with British Guiana Submitted to the National Government by the Venezuelan Experts" (1967).

²⁹ Valarino de Abreu op.cit., p.16, citing files CO 925/1319, MR 1887 (4), BG 46 and FO 925/1591.

³⁰ Almécija Bermúdez (1987), p.19. See also Ely (1997), p.4, who expresses a similar viewpoint.

inaccurate sketch map of 1840.³¹ A similar explanation has been offered by HMG.³² Subsequently, a proposal for the boundary line by Venezuela was rejected by Britain.³³ It was against this background that Venezuela requested US support.³⁴ Appeals were made in 1876, 1880, 1884 and 1887.³⁵ Between 1881 and 1883, the US merely sought to inform Britain of its preference for a settlement of the boundary dispute by arbitration.³⁶ As will be seen later, subsequent US intervention on behalf of Venezuela marked a significant turning point in the dispute.

The situation improved between Britain and Venezuela when in May 1885, Lord Granville, the British Foreign Secretary negotiated a treaty to submit the boundary to arbitration, a move which he had previously resisted.³⁷ It is not clear, as Bertram observes, whether Lord Granville was influenced by the US expressions on the issue, however a change of government from the Liberals to the Conservatives was to result in the Treaty not being ratified.³⁸ Lord Salisbury's conservative government returned to power and immediately notified the Venezuelan government that it would not be proceeding with the negotiations.³⁹ Friction between the two opposing sides continued and was to culminate in Caracas severing diplomatic relations with London in February 1897. This had followed Britain's refusal to agree to Venezuela's demand for the

³¹ Humphreys (1969), pp.191-192.

³² "Comments on Record of Discussions on Venezuelan-British Guiana Boundary Dispute on 9-10 Dec, 1965" in FO 371/185061.

³³ "The Case" (1899), pp.127-128. See Appendix 1 of this thesis.

³⁴ Bernardo Nuñez (1967), p.37.

³⁵ Valarino de Abreu, op.cit., p.17.

³⁶ Rout (1971), p.14; and Perkins (1937), pp.16-17. See "Linea de Granville" in Appendix 1.

³⁷ Bertram (1992), p.5.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Bertram (1992), pp.5; and 115 citing Grover Cleveland, The Venezuelan Boundary Controversy, Princeton (1913).

evacuation of the territory between the Orinoco and the Pomeroon and for that territory to be submitted to arbitration.⁴⁰

With tensions continuing to rise between Britain and Venezuela, it is not surprising that the two sides clashed in the disputed area. Such an occurrence in February 1895 has become known as the "Yuruan Incident".⁴¹ The authorities in British Guiana had erected a police post in the Yuruan area to protect British subjects. However, Yuruan lay in the territory claimed by Venezuela, and the latter issued orders for the British police to be ejected. Two British officials were arrested and allegedly ill-treated. The Yuruan incident which also involved allegations of flag burning by either side, was to cost Venezuela £1,500 following British demands for compensation.⁴² It is against this backdrop of rising tensions that the US intervened in what was now known as the Anglo-Venezuela dispute.

US intervention on behalf of Venezuela in the boundary dispute with Britain has often been depicted in popular history as the moment when Washington was prepared to go to war with Britain over Venezuela in defence of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. However, as will be shown below, the careful examination of the facts by some writers – notably Grenville & Young (1966) and Bertram (1992), LaFeber in *The American Historical Review* (1961) and Smith (1979) – have illuminated the motivating undercurrents behind the US's intervention.

Grenville and Young argue that the role of Williams Scruggs, a former US

⁴⁰ "The Case" (1899), p.132.

⁴¹ Bernardo Nuñez (1967), pp.89-102, provides a detailed insight into this incident. See also Bertram (1992), p.13; and Humphreys (1969), p.204.

⁴² Humphreys (1969), p.204; Bertram (1992), p.13; and Bernardo Nuñez (1967), pp.89-102.

diplomat and later advocate for Venezuela "...deserves far more credit for focussing the attention of newspapers and Congress on the Anglo-Venezuelan dispute than has so far been given him"⁴³ Scruggs was employed by the Venezuelan government as essentially their propagandist/publicist in bringing Venezuela's case to the attention of the US and lobbying for US support. One of Scruggs' actions, which has been credited with fulfilling just those tasks, was a pamphlet he had prepared, entitled, "British Aggression in Venezuela, the Monroe Doctrine on Trial" in 1894. The argument of the publication is self-explanatory given its title. As Grenville and Young state, "Scruggs chose a felicitous title for his pamphlet which, in the best tradition of the journalist, packed a punch in nine words." The pamphlet was widely distributed to newspaper editors, senators and other influential persons. Scruggs made reference to the Monroe Doctrine in calling for US intervention against British encroachment in the hemisphere.⁴⁴ Moreover, he had succeeded in getting a resolution placed before Congress on the dispute on February 13, 1895. The resolution which urged Britain to arbitration was passed by both Houses of Congress on February 30, 1895. Grenville and Young also argue, "American intervention had been imminent for years."⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Scruggs is credited for his role in stimulating both private and public opinion in the US, and ultimately President Cleveland.

Another writer, Smith, has attributed the US's move to active intervention from initial passivity to the appointment of Secretary of State Richard Olney.⁴⁶ The

⁴³ Grenville and Young (1966), p.135. Perkins (1937) although not going into as much detail also credits the role of Scruggs.

⁴⁴ Grenville and Young (1966), pp.138-139.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.140.

⁴⁶ Smith (1979), p.206.

appointment of Olney was made following the death of Gresham on 28 May 1895. According to Smith, "The new Secretary of State...believed even more firmly that the Venezuelans were the aggrieved party and that Britain had for too long deliberately delayed a settlement."⁴⁷

Olney was certainly to demonstrate his conviction when he penned a letter to the US ambassador in London for forwarding to Lord Salisbury. In this despatch, he invoked the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 in calling for Britain to submit the territory in its entirety to arbitration. A few features from Olney's despatch are worth quoting here in order to gauge not only the Secretary of State's interpretation of the 1823 Doctrine, but also the extent to which he was prepared to use that interpretation against Britain in its dispute with Venezuela. He regarded Britain's distance from the American continent as a significant factor precluding it from having influence there. "Distance and three thousand miles of intervening ocean make any permanent political union between a European and an American state unnatural and inexpedient".⁴⁸ He went on to assert what has become known as the "Olney Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine. "Today...the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition".⁴⁹ That Britain was being commanded to arbitration is evident in the next passage:

"You [US Ambassador to London, Thomas Bayard] are instructed, therefore, to present the foregoing views to Lord Salisbury by reading to him this communication (leaving with him a copy if you so desire), and to reinforce them by such pertinent considerations as will doubtless occur to you. They call for a definite decision upon the point whether Great Britain will consent or will decline to submit the Venezuelan question in its entirety to impartial arbitration...it is his

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Reprinted in Perkins (1937), p.159.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.161.

[Cleveland's] wish to be made acquainted with the fact at such an early date as will enable him to lay the whole subject before Congress in his annual message".⁵⁰

Lord Salisbury's reply to Olney's despatch did not arrive in time for Cleveland's annual address to Congress as was demanded. Nevertheless, when it did arrive, his reply was equally acerbic. He not only challenged the relevance of the Monroe Doctrine to the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute, but also sought to question the Monroe Doctrine itself and particularly Olney's assertions of the doctrine.⁵¹ As Perkins' summary of Lord Salisbury's challenges, "They constituted a fitting, indeed, a crushing rebuke to the imprudent generalizations of the Secretary of State".⁵²

Cleveland's response to Lord Salisbury's rebuttal was his famous message to congress on December 17, 1895. With Britain still refusing to submit to arbitration all territory, Cleveland appealed to Congress for funds to establish a boundary commission, which would not only investigate the dispute between Britain and Venezuela, but which would also be charged with demarcating and enforcing the boundary, with the US's power behind it.⁵³ The boundary dispute had thus been transformed into an issue of significance, with the US seemingly prepared to embark on unilateral action. As Smith states, "In 1895 direct confrontation could not be avoided when the Venezuela boundary dispute was transformed into the simple but explosive question of whether or not Britain recognized the validity of the Monroe Doctrine."⁵⁴ Perkins expresses a similar

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.167.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.181, for an excerpt of Salisbury's reply of November 26, 1895. Bertram (1992), pp.30-35, for an analysis of Salisbury's reply.

⁵² Perkins (1937), p.181-182.

⁵³ Salisbury, reprinted in Perkins (1937), pp.191-192.

⁵⁴ Smith (1979), p.xiv.

interpretation when he states, "It was the Venezuela crisis of 1895 which, for the first time since the Civil War, brought two great nations into sharp collision with one another on the basis of the principles of 1823..."⁵⁵ However, what at first appeared to be an issue that would lead to confrontation between the US and UK, was to soon be transformed into one of friendship and cordiality in Anglo-American relations. But first, what had motivated the US to act on behalf of Venezuela?

Some commentators have argued that ultimately the US was motivated by its self-interest, rather than that of Venezuela's. Grenville and Young refer to Cleveland's own admission of acting on behalf of his country's interest. The Monroe Doctrine was being applied, Cleveland wrote, "for its importance to our government and welfare." Though the dispute of another country had provided the occasion, the American president stated, "we are, I suppose, not looking after its interests but *our own*."⁵⁶ Exactly what those interests are have been elaborated by LaFeber who argues that the US's action was a direct response to the perceived economic threats from British encroachments in Latin America.⁵⁷ Indeed, LaFeber makes "the economic influence" a significant factor in Cleveland's policy, especially in view of the US's own economic crisis as a result of the 1893 depression.

Smith, while not placing the economic influence at the centre of his thesis, nevertheless alludes to the US's watchful eye on British encroachment in Latin America.⁵⁸ Moreover, as Smith later elaborates the US's reaction has to be seen within

⁵⁵ Perkins (1937), p.136.

⁵⁶ Grenville and Young (1966), quoting from Cleveland to Bayard, December 29, 1895. Nevins, *Letters of Cleveland*, pp.417-20.

⁵⁷ LaFeber in *The American Historical Review* (1961).

⁵⁸ Smith (1979), p.4.

the context of its own expansionist policy. "It reflected the long-held consciousness of American hemispheric power brought to the surface by the interaction of diplomatic events within the inherently expansionist nature of American society itself."⁵⁹ The Anglo-Venezuelan dispute had become caught up in Anglo-American rivalries, or so it seemed.

Bertram refers to the fact that only a few days after President Cleveland's famous message that the likelihood of confrontation or a possible war between the US and Britain appeared to have subsided. "Within a few days after the President's message on December 17th, a trend toward peace set in, which, within a month, caused Britishers to comment that the Anglo-American relations were better than before the outbreak of bellicosity."⁶⁰ Bertram further elaborates on the extent of US friendship with Britain when he states, "This trend quickly grew into a warm friendship and by a decade later into a virtual entente with world-wide importance."⁶¹ A number of factors account for the changed relationship after the apparent threat implicit in Cleveland's famous message to Congress of 1895. In the first instance, Bertram argues that the slump which occurred in the stock markets on Friday, 20 December 1895 - three days after the President's message - had a sobering effect on the Americans and any consideration they may have given to a war with Britain.⁶² On the other side of the Atlantic, Britain was also beset by her own problems, not least the antagonizing of European powers as a result of her "splendid isolation", trading opportunities gained in the Orient and her share in the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.26.

⁶⁰ Bertram (1992), p.59.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Scramble for Africa.⁶³ Moreover, Britain faced new trouble in the Transvaal when Kaiser Wilhelm sent his offer of assistance by telegram on 4 January 1896 to President Kruger, following Dr Leander Jameson's leading of a group of armed police from Cape Colony into the Transvaal.⁶⁴ Against this "vulnerability", to use Smith's term, and with Italy as her only friend of any importance in Europe, it is quite easy to see why Britain would have preferred not to add the US to its list of enemies.⁶⁵ This is especially in view of the US's growing significance. As Smith notes, "But while Foreign Office officials attached a low political and cultural value to the United States they did not underrate its commercial significance and potential."⁶⁶

After the President's December 1895 speech and more than a month after the appointment of Cleveland's Boundary Commission, the American Ambassador Bayard informed the Foreign Office on 4 February 1896 that the Commission was established merely to ascertain facts for the President. This is as opposed to acting as an arbitral tribunal to determine where the boundary should be. As Bertram interprets it, "The purpose of the investigation was certainly hostile to none; the sole concern of the United States was the peaceful solution of a controversy between two friendly powers."⁶⁷ The same writer notes that signs of war had more or less abated after Christmas, following a statement made by Senator Gray, who was known to be a close aide of Cleveland. The senator had alluded to the essentially investigative purpose of the Boundary

⁶³ Ibid., p.71 and Smith (1979), pp.24, 207.

⁶⁴ Bertram (1992), p.71.

⁶⁵ Smith (1979), p.24; and Bertram (1992), p.71.

⁶⁶ Smith (1979), p.11.

⁶⁷ Bertram (1992), p.82.

Commission.⁶⁸ However, while Bertram argues that rumours emanating from Senator Gray's speech influenced a change in British attitude,⁶⁹ Smith, on other hand, states that the British cabinet had overruled Salisbury since 11 January 1896 in deciding that an "honourable solution" should be sought with the US.⁷⁰ Whatever the ascending order of influences on either side of the Atlantic, the key point is that neither side was on the verge of war.

Although Smith and Bertram differ in their interpretations of the start of Anglo-American friendship, they both concur that far from reaching the state of war, British and American friendship was secured.⁷¹ Bertram, who cites examples of Anglo-US rivalries and Anglo-phobic sentiment in the US argues that the crisis "saw the genesis or birth time of Anglo-American friendship".⁷² In the final analysis, one should not discount Grenville and Young's argument that the president did not in any case have any intentions of going to war with Britain. "When the President declared 'I am fully alive to the responsibility incurred, and keenly realize all the consequences that may follow', the phrase was mistakenly interpreted as meaning that Cleveland was prepared if necessary to go to war."⁷³ The plausibility of this argument may be further indicated by the fact that Britain possessed greater naval might than the US.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.68-69 for more details.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.68

⁷⁰ Smith (1979), p.207. See also Grenville and Young (1966), p.203.

⁷¹ For further details on the change of attitude away from a threat of war to demands for arbitration on both sides of the Atlantic, including the role of the press and public opinion in this change, see Bertram (1992), pp.75-92. While acknowledging that "...a remarkable degree of friendly accord" was soon achieved between Britain and the US (Smith, 1979, p.208), Smith is quick to point out that this was not merely a result of events after December 1895, since "...Britain had long recognized the political predominance of the United States in Western Hemisphere questions."

⁷² Bertram (1992), Preface.

⁷³ Grenville and Young (1966), p.168.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.172.

Britain subsequently agreed to the dispute going to arbitration. It is not surprising, therefore, that some authors have interpreted this as a success for US diplomacy. Smith, for instance, interprets this decision as "...a satisfying diplomatic victory and a resounding affirmation of the Monroe Doctrine".⁷⁵ Following nearly a year of negotiations between the US and Britain on the substance of the Arbitration Treaty - negotiations from which Venezuela appears to have been excluded until the last moment - the Treaty was signed between the British and Venezuelan ambassadors to Washington on 2 February 1897.⁷⁶ The treaty was later ratified by both sides in June 1897. In the meantime, the Boundary Commission established under Cleveland had ceased its investigations since November 1896.⁷⁷

The Arbitrators on the Tribunal were American, British and Russian: Lord Russell of Killowen, Lord Chief Justice of Britain, who replaced Baron Herschell following the latter's death and Sir Richard Henn Collins, Justice of the British Supreme Court, were both nominated by Britain. Venezuela was also allowed two arbitrators, though one had to be nominated by the President of the United States, as stipulated in the arbitral treaty.⁷⁸ In any event, the president of Venezuela nominated an American, Melville Weston Fuller, the Chief Justice of the US; the nominee by the US on behalf of Venezuela was David Josiah Brewer, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the US. The fifth jurist selected by the four nominees and who was designated President of the Tribunal was the Russian

⁷⁵ Smith (1979), p.xiv.

⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, chapter 7, "The Search for a Solution", pp.95-113, and chapter 8, "The Solution and End of the Controversy", pp.115-127 on the discussions between and within the US and Britain on the search for the terms of arbitration. LaFeber, *op. cit.*, p.964 quoting from the Olney Papers (Olney to Bayard, January 22, 1896) states that Olney "...argued that he did not care to have Venezuela 'consulted at every step'." See also Young (1942), pp.251-252, 260; and Grenville and Young (1966), pp.175-178.

⁷⁷ Humphreys (1969), p.213.

⁷⁸ See Appendix 2 for the text of the 1897 treaty of arbitration.

professor of international law, Frederic de Martens.⁷⁹ The Arbitrators passed down their award on 3 October 1899. The award was largely in favour of Britain which gained 50,000 square miles approximately of the disputed territory and was said to have followed the Schomburgk line with the exception of two modifications.⁸⁰ On the other hand, Venezuela, which was awarded 10,000 square miles of territory also gained control of the strategic mouth of the Orinoco River. Venezuela was also awarded 150 square miles of territory in the interior, thereby giving her control of the gold-mining area of the Yuruan.⁸¹

Smith has argued that the effect of Britain conceding to the arbitration was a vindication of the Monroe Doctrine by acknowledging the US's pre-eminence in western hemisphere issues.⁸² Moreover, despite Venezuela being awarded much less than she had hoped for from the arbitral tribunal, there appears to be consensus among some writers, that the US's objectives had nevertheless been achieved. Indeed Bertram states, "On the whole the American view of the award was that it was fair."⁸³ Such an argument is based on the premise that the US's aim was merely to ensure Venezuela had obtained "a fair trial through arbitration."⁸⁴ LaFeber who states that one of the US's objectives was to get the dispute to arbitration also adds that the other objective for the US was to secure for Venezuela control of the Orinoco.⁸⁵ Grenville and Young take their conclusions one step further by arguing, "Olney did not champion Venezuela; that is clearly brought out by his

⁷⁹ For background details on the arbitrators, see Ministry of Information (1981b).

⁸⁰ Bertram (1992), p.123.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.122-123. See Appendix 2 of this thesis for the full text of the award.

⁸² Smith (1979), pp.24, 28. LaFeber, op. cit., makes a similar argument.

⁸³ Bertram (1992), p.23. See also Grenville and Young (1966), p.178.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.23.

⁸⁵ LaFeber op. cit., p964. See also Grenville and Young (1966), p.178 who assert that Cleveland "...hailed the control Venezuela gained over the Orinoco as a great victory."

behaviour during the negotiations."⁸⁶ They cite, as evidence of this argument, issues such as Olney reaching agreement with Britain on the terms of arbitration without Venezuela's consultation; the abandonment of Venezuela's claim to historical title and not allowing Venezuela to name any arbitrators in the US draft of the treaty.⁸⁷ These authors claim that it was Salisbury who had made the concession to Venezuela where it was allowed to name one of the arbitrators.⁸⁸ Assuming the validity of their arguments, it may be concluded that the US not only acted on its self-interest, but interpreted victory from that perspective.

The Re-opening of the Territorial Dispute in the 1960s

Mallet-Prevost's Memorandum and Venezuelan Action at the UN

The 1899 Award of the tribunal had stated that the award was a "full, perfect and final settlement".⁸⁹ The boundary, according to the terms of the tribunal award, was demarcated between British and Venezuelan boundary commissioners on 10 January 1905.⁹⁰ However, on the Venezuelan part the issue has been regarded by some as far from being finally settled. Braveboy-Wagner states, "Venezuelan officials protested the award occasionally over the years particularly in the Venezuelan Congress".⁹¹ Such protests from Venezuela were largely confined to the domestic political arena.

⁸⁶ Grenville and Young (1966), p.175.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.175-176.

⁸⁸ Grenville and Young (1966), p.177.

⁸⁹ See Appendix 2 for full details of the award.

⁹⁰ Full text of the agreement between British and Venezuelan boundary commissioners reprinted in MFA (1984b), pp.15-16.

⁹¹ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.108. For full details of when interested Venezuelan parties have taken issue with the awards, see MRE (1967). For a more updated account MRE (2000b).

The Anglo-Venezuelan territorial dispute was re-opened by the Venezuelan government in 1962 when that country took the issue before the UN. At the 130th meeting of the Fourth Committee on 22 February 1962, the Venezuelan representative to the UN, Carlos Sosa Rodríguez, registered the "serious reservations" his country held against the 1899 Award.⁹² The Venezuelan government's main position was that the 1899 award was the result of a compromise, rather than a judicial decision:

"El Laudo fue resultado de una transacción política que se hizo a espaldas de Venezuela sacrificando sus legítimos derechos. La frontera fue trazada arbitrariamente, sino observar para nada, ni las Reglas específicas del compromiso arbitral ni los principios del Derecho Internacional aplicables al caso."⁹³

Subsequently, at the 348th meeting of the UN's Special Political Committee, Venezuela had included in Agenda Item 88, "Question of boundaries between Venezuela and the territory of British Guiana."⁹⁴ At this time, the Venezuelan foreign minister, Marcos Falcón Briceño sought to put Venezuela's case forward. Apart from reiterating such points as Venezuela's interpretation of the Treaty of Munster 1648, on Spanish versus Dutch possessions, the basis of that country's arguments was a posthumous memorandum published in the *American Journal of International Law* by one of the Venezuelan counsel at the 1899 Tribunal.⁹⁵

Given the significance attached to this memorandum and its place in the history of the dispute, it is worth recalling some of its major points. In his memorandum, Severo Mallet-Prevost claimed that far from being a judicious decision, the 1899 Award was the result of a compromise. Mallet-Prevost, who had dictated his memo to Judge Otto

⁹² MRE (1967), pp.16-17. See also MRE (1963), pp.xxii-xl.

⁹³ DOC-005, MRE (2000b).

⁹⁴ UN (1962a). See also MRE (1967).

Schoenrich, from the same law firm as himself, for publication after his death, went on to allege the exact way in which that compromise was reached. That is, the Russian jurist at the 1897-1899 tribunal, Frederic de Martens, was supposed to have forced both the British and US arbitrators into making a unanimous decision:

"He [Martens] proposed a compromise that the award designate a boundary line east of the mouth of the Orinoco, the line which was in fact adopted. If the American judges agreed to this line, he and the British judges would also vote for it and the award of the Tribunal would be unanimous. If the American judges did not agree to it, he would vote with the British judges for the line claimed by Great Britain, which would thus become the boundary line by majority vote of the Tribunal."⁹⁶

Moreover, Mallet-Prevost alleged that the position of the British members and the Russian president of the tribunal was the result of a deal entered into following the Russian's visit to England during a recess of the tribunal. He contended:

"The decision which was accordingly rendered was unanimous but while it gave to Venezuela the most important strategic point at issue it was unjust to Venezuela and deprived her of very extensive and important territory to which, in my opinion, Great Britain had not the shadow of a right."⁹⁷

The Mallet-Prevost memorandum was the basis upon which Venezuela at the Special Political Committee had sought to invoke the nullity of the 1899 Award. The purpose of Venezuela raising the issue in this group is recorded in the official UN records as follows:

"Venezuela was not asking the Committee to make a decision on the substance of the question. It had brought the matter before the United Nations not in order to seek a decision but for the purpose of letting the world know the compelling reasons that had prevented it from accepting the arbitral award of 1899 as a final and definitive settlement. Venezuela's sole desire was to seek a friendly

⁹⁵ (1949), 43:528-530.

⁹⁶ *The American Journal of International Law* (1949), p527.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.530.

settlement of the problem with the United Kingdom and to record its support for British Guiana's independence."⁹⁸

This action by Caracas represented its first major attempt to internationalise its reservations about the 1899 award. It is not surprising, given the nature of Mallet-Prevost's allegations that Venezuela sought to take up the issue on the world stage. It should, however, be noted that in a later issue of the same journal in which the memorandum was published, Clifton Child refuted Mallet-Prevost's allegations.⁹⁹ Child also identified a number of errors of fact in Mallet-Prevost's recollection of events, based on a thorough analysis of the verbatim records of the tribunal and newspaper reports at the time. He surmises:

"In fact, apart from the resentment which the Counsel for Venezuela apparently felt against the verdict, there were none of the elements of the story as Mr. Mallet-Prevost now tells it – a circumstance which makes it tempting to assume that in nursing his grievance against the Tribunal through the years, Mr. Mallet-Prevost allowed his imagination to supply a number of details which were missing from the statement which he and General Harrison made [speech declaring 'victory' for Venezuela passed to a Reuter Correspondent the day after the award] in 1899."¹⁰⁰

Contrary to these findings against Mallet-Prevost, another writer in the same journal, Williams Dennis, supports essentially, the posthumous allegations.¹⁰¹ Acknowledging some of Child's arguments, Dennis states:

"But it is submitted that this does not in any way tend to discredit Mr. Mallet-Prevost's statement of the important facts of which he had personal knowledge which show the unjudicial method by which the judgement of the arbitrators was brought about, and this is the important point in Mr. Mallet-Prevost's memorandum, not only as respects the British arbitration but as tending to

⁹⁸ UN (1962a). For the text of the Venezuelan foreign minister's address to the UN on 12 November 1962, see MRE (963), pp.xxiii-xl.

⁹⁹ Child in *The American Journal of International Law* (1950), pp.682-693.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.682.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.720-727.

illuminate and illustrate the great defect of arbitration in general; i.e., compromise."¹⁰²

Further, Dennis elaborates that Mallet-Prevost had told a similar story to him thirty-four years prior to the memorandum, although he admits that he does not recall being told of an Anglo-Ruso deal being behind the compromise.¹⁰³ In backing up Mallet-Prevost's allegations, Dennis also states that compromise was a feature of international arbitrations.¹⁰⁴

HMG's response to the Venezuelan allegations at the 349th meeting of the Special Political Committee was made through its representative at the UK Mission to the UN, R.T. Crowe. It declared that its views had not changed since they were expressed at the 1302nd meeting of the Fourth Committee in 1962. That is, "It still considered that the western boundary of British Guiana and Venezuela had been finally settled by the award which the arbitral tribunal had announced on 3 October 1899."¹⁰⁵ HMG also refuted Venezuela's interpretation of the Treaty of Munster and sought to clarify what it regarded as the true facts surrounding the boundary dispute and its settlement in 1899.¹⁰⁶

Despite refuting the Venezuelan claims, it is interesting to note that the UK's representative later went on to state that HMG, in concurrence with the government of British Guiana, was offering a tripartite examination of the documents on the basis of

¹⁰² Dennis in *ibid.*, p.722.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp.724-725.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.727.

¹⁰⁵ UN (1962b), p.123. This remains the British government's position in 1999 according to Susan LeJeune. Since the introduction of the UN Good Officer process in 1990, HMG has encouraged the Venezuelan and Guyanese governments to pursue a peaceful diplomatic solution to their differences within the process, Interview 8 March 2000.

¹⁰⁶ UN (1962b), pp.123-127.

their surety that the disagreement was based "...on a misunderstanding which could be put right."¹⁰⁷ The offer was made with the following caveat:

"That offer was in no sense a proposal to engage in substantive talks about the revision of the frontier, for which there was no justification; it merely reflected the British government's anxiety to dispel any doubts that the Venezuelan government might have about the validity of the arbitral award and to remove once and for all the misunderstanding that had arisen."¹⁰⁸

This offer was clearly a major development in the re-opening of the issue. As Joseph accurately concludes:

"Whatever positive interpretation may have been attributed in the past to this caveat, the offer commenced the first stage in the negotiations of the border issue since the arbitral award; in essence it was the first step in the processional path culminating with the Geneva Agreement of February 1966."¹⁰⁹

This is a position adopted by the post-independence governments to 1992:

"It was not the Geneva Agreement that opened the door to discussion of the controversy. It was in fact the arrangement, well before independence for an examination of the documents which was an arrangement between Britain and Venezuela on the British side to quell what they saw, this Venezuelan clamour; but an arrangement to which the PPP administration in Guyana was party..."¹¹⁰

Ramphal's arguments do not take into consideration the fact that while the PPP-led self-government in 1962 was consulted by Britain, it did not have responsibility for foreign and defence matters, which remained with the colonial power. As such, the decision taken to grant Venezuela its request to re-examine the documents was ultimately not that of the Jagan government. Nevertheless, Ramphal takes his argument one step further by contending that the decision to allow examination of the documents made the Geneva

¹⁰⁷ UN (1962c), p.125.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.127.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph (1998), p.30.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Shridath Ramphal, 23 March 2001.

Agreement unavoidable. "In fact, Geneva became more difficult to avoid because this process had already started at the examination of the documents."¹¹¹ As a result of this offer for a tripartite examination of the documents and the Venezuelan government's acceptance, the question of the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana was taken out of the Special Political Committee.¹¹²

Examination of Documents and the Geneva Agreement

The first series of meetings at ministerial level between Britain and Venezuela took place in London on 5, 6 and 7 November 1963. The Venezuelan foreign minister, Marcos Falcón Briceño, represented his country while R.A. Butler represented Britain, with Governor Ralph Grey being the British Guiana representative. The meeting was held to review the progress that each side's experts were making in their examination of the historical documents.¹¹³ Suffice to say that at this stage both sides maintained their positions, as had been made at the Special Political Committee, regarding the dispute.¹¹⁴

It did not escape the Venezuelan foreign minister's attention that even the inclusion of such items on the agenda was a major step forward for its case.

"A nadie puede escapar el hecho de que la posición británica de los comienzos de este proceso en 1962 había ya cambiado notablemente. Lo acordado en la agenda distaba en gran manera de aquella primera oferta formulada por su Representante señor Crowe, en el sentido de que estaban dispuestos únicamente a examinar los documentos relativo al Laudo de 1.899."¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² UN (1962c), p.127.

¹¹³ See MRE (1967), pp.21-22.

¹¹⁴ Archivo Central, MRE, 1961: "Exposición al Congreso Nacional del doctor Ignacio Iribarren Borges, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, sobre el Acuerdo de Ginebra, el día 17 de marzo de 1966." This document can also be found in MRE (1967).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

The first phase of the discussions between the experts was subsequently completed in the first half of 1964, with each side exchanging their reports on 3 August 1965.¹¹⁶

In the meantime, the Venezuelan Ambassador in London was engaged in negotiations between October and December 1965. Neither side found the reports of each other's experts acceptable at the ministerial meeting held on 9 and 10 December 1965.¹¹⁷ As such it was agreed that there would be another meeting in Geneva from 16-17 February 1966. It was at this meeting that what became known as the "Geneva Agreement" was signed by Britain, British Guiana and Venezuela.¹¹⁸ It was during these negotiations, that the agenda was advanced in Venezuela's favour as far as it was concerned. "...se vino a acordar una agenda que significó un considerable avance en favor de nuestros puntos de vista."¹¹⁹ These progressions are summarised as follows: the issue was accorded the status of a "controversy" between Venezuela and the United Kingdom. Following on from this is the recognition that there is a need to resolve the controversy.

"Mas aún para disipar cualquier duda sobre la naturaleza de las conversaciones que no podían ya reducirse al examen académico de documentos, se estipuló en el punto segunda de la agenda que se iba a 'buscar soluciones satisfactorias para el arreglo práctico de la controversia que ha surgido como resultado de la contención venezolana de que el Laudo de 1.899 es nulo e írrito'."¹²⁰

Indeed, Article 1 of the Geneva Agreement states the key accord to emerge from the Geneva meetings. That is, the decision to establish a Mixed Commission, charged with

¹¹⁶ Braveboy-Wagner (1984) states a total of fifteen meetings between the experts were held in London from February to May 1964.

¹¹⁷ Expediente no. 7, op.cit.

¹¹⁸ See MRE (1967), p.60, for the joint communiqué issued after the Geneva meetings.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

"...seeking satisfactory solutions for the practical settlement of the controversy between Venezuela and the United Kingdom which has arisen as the result of the Venezuelan contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899 about the frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela is null and void."¹²¹

This agreement did not therefore provide the solution to the British Guiana-Venezuela territorial problem that was now officially deemed a "controversy". Rather it sought to provide a mechanism through which the solutions for a settlement may be arrived at. As will be shown in chapter 3, the meaning, especially of Article 1 of what is the very carefully worded diplomatic agreement was to be a source of much disagreement between Guyana and Venezuela.

The fact that Venezuela's challenge to the legitimacy of the 1899 Award at the UN in 1962 had within four years been given recognition as a controversy requiring a solution, clearly represented a huge step forward for that state. As its president at the time, Romulo Betancourt stated in his presidential message of 7 March 1964:

"...el Acuerdo concertado, con la Gran Bretaña y la Guayana Inglesa, en Ginebra, ya que tengo la bien fundada convicción de que él reabre el caso de la Guayana Esequiba ofreciendo a Venezuela una oportunidad, como nunca tuvo antes, para hacer valer sus derechos y conseguir la reparación del daño que nos causará el doloroso Laudo de París."¹²²

However, for the opposition in Guyana, the PPP, which, unlike its Venezuelan counterparts were not represented at the Geneva talks, the issue was a "sell-out".¹²³ This view was elaborated further in a statement:

"In the light of the decisions of the Geneva Conference on the British Guiana-Venezuela border issue the People's Progressive Party wishes to denounce the so-called settlement for the reasons that it gives substance and status to a spurious claim that has no legal basis and also compromises the sovereignty of this country by associating an aggressor Government in a special arrangement in relation to

¹²¹ The Geneva Agreement reproduced in Appendix 5.

¹²² MRE (1967), p.6.

¹²³ See Hubbard (1967).

the territory which is the subject of controversy and the basis for a threat of aggression...In addition to this, Venezuela appears to have been given special consideration with regard to the exploitation of the natural resources of what that country calls Guiana-Essequibo."¹²⁴

Mirroring the above quoted extract from president Romulo Betancourt's March 1964 speech, Jagan concluded that the Geneva Agreement had, in effect, given the Venezuelan claim merit. Jagan went one step further by also stating that it had also given the US government a mechanism by which it could intervene in Guyana's domestic policies.

"...the Geneva Agreement and the appointment of a Mixed Guyana-Venezuela Commission have given the Venezuelan government the opportunity to say that there was merit in the claim. The examination during the next 4 years of the so-called border claim gives the US government the lever to intervene through the puppet Venezuelan government in our domestic affairs against any progressive Guyanese government."¹²⁵

The events charted in this section from Venezuela's re-opening of the dispute to the Geneva Agreement leaves a number of important questions unanswered. Firstly, why did Venezuela choose to reopen the issue at the time it did? This question is particularly important when one considers that the Mallet-Prevost memorandum cited by Venezuela was published since 1949. Moreover, Venezuela had registered its objection to the Award at regional fora in 1951 and 1954.¹²⁶ Ince muses, "Venezuela's proclivity for silence on numerous occasions...creates a credibility gap on the real reasons for the lengthy spasms of muteness."¹²⁷

Rupert Roopnaraine of the Working People's Alliance, which was formed after

¹²⁴ Statement released by the PPP on 19 February 1966 and reprinted in *ibid.*, pp.29-31; and "Venezuela - The Sell-Out" in *Thunder*, October-November 1966.

¹²⁵ "Non-Aligned Fiction: The Foreign Policy Debate", *Thunder*, April 1967. See also Jagan (1968), p.8.

¹²⁶ See MRE (1967).

¹²⁷ Ince (1970), p10.

the Geneva Agreement in 1979, has expressed his disagreement with the signing of that agreement. "My preference would have been that it had not even been signed, personally, because whether we like it or not, it gave legitimacy to the claim."¹²⁸ It is fair to say that there exists a consensus amongst the parties in Guyana, with the exception of the PNC, against the Geneva Agreement.

But why did Britain agree to a re-examination of the documents, having previously stated that the issue had been settled? Such a question is especially pertinent considering the fact that as late as September 1962, the reaction in the Foreign Office was against giving into the demands for talks: "This not unexpected move by the Venezuelans should give us cause to strengthen our resolve not to succumb to threats and blackmailing attempts to have 'talks' on the frontier issue."¹²⁹

The Archives

Early writers on the events surrounding the reopening of the dispute - Kissler (1971), Ince (1970) and Braveboy-Wagner (1984) - were disadvantaged by the unavailability of archival material. Venezuela did to some extent provide some insights into this period through the publication of a number of related documents in MRE (1967). However, even Braveboy-Wagner, whose chapter 7 "Cooperation and Conflict: First Period 1962-1967" relied heavily on these Venezuelan-published documents

¹²⁸ Interview with Rupert Roopnaraine, 10 May 2000.

¹²⁹ Hand-written note dated 18 September 1962 in FO 371/162 667.

acknowledged the limitations of her work in this regard, due to archival material not being declassified and available.¹³⁰

Joseph has attempted to piece together the behind the scenes occurrences during that period from declassified material in the US and British archives available since the mid-1990s. He identifies a number of factors from the available PRO records that may account for the re-opening of the dispute in 1962 by Venezuela:

"The available official British documents confirm the persistent views that the establishment of Self-Government in British Guiana in August 1961 along with the promise of Independence; the new security perceptions in the Caribbean deriving from the Cuban revolution which brought Dr. Fidel Castro to power; the assumptions about the establishment of another Communist state in a region strategically vital to the United States, and the political implosion in British Guiana presented a major problem for Anglo-American diplomacy and cumulatively contributed to the reopening of the boundary issue between British Guiana and Venezuela."¹³¹

Joseph's first point about the link between the reopening of the dispute and the onset of self-government in BG is plausible when one considers that BG gained self-government in August 1961 and that it was shortly afterwards - February 1962 - that Venezuela took the issue to the UN. Indeed, as is noted in one declassified Foreign Office despatch on developments in Caracas at this time:

"The decision of the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly to hear Jagan as a petitioner and the ensuing United Nations debate have re-awakened the interest of those elements here who enjoy writing articles for the press about the iniquities of the 1899 Arbitration award which fixed the present boundaries between Venezuela and British Guiana...It was even alleged that Venezuela intended to raise her claim at the General Assembly."¹³²

Moreover, Joseph's subsequent points about the links with the Cold War concerns in the region are more than feasible when one considers the US and British machinations which

¹³⁰ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.297.

¹³¹ Joseph (1998), p.5. See also Joseph's article in *Guyana Review*, December 1968, pp.58-61.

occurred in BG in the early 1960s in order to prevent the Marxist-led PPP government from leading the country to independence.¹³³ The US's policy on Venezuela contrasted with that on BG since the strong anti-communist stance of the newly democratic Betancourt government in Venezuela was looked on favourably in Washington. The US's view in 1962 is summarised in a draft paper as follows: "The focus of the draft paper is necessarily and properly on support for the present Venezuelan Government as the best of the available alternatives to promote a stable, constitutional and prosperous Venezuela friendly to the US."¹³⁴ Moreover, the US had significant investments in Venezuela which no doubt influenced the interest it showed in that country's politics. As this document from the State Department archives notes:

"US economic interest in Venezuela is quite substantial, since total US trade with the country is greater than with any other in Latin America and US direct investment in Venezuela (about \$3 billion) is larger than in any other country except Canada. In fact, foreign capital and technology (US, British, Dutch), have been primarily responsible for development of the country's natural resources."¹³⁵

The issue of communism and the PPP government were also of direct interest to Venezuela not only because of geographical proximity, but also because the Betancourt government in Venezuela was fighting its own insurgency problems from communist-inspired guerrillas. One US State Department telegram reports in 1962 that "...left-wing and communist elements in Venezuela have instigated violent disorders in Caracas and elsewhere in Venezuela causing numerous deaths and extensive property damage."¹³⁶ The Venezuelan ministry's annual report, *Libro Amarillo*, also contains a number of

¹³² British Embassy, Caracas, to Foreign Office, 19 January 1962, FO 371/162663.

¹³³ See Chapter 1 of this thesis.

¹³⁴ Memo from the US Embassy in Caracas to the Venezuelan Desk Officer in Washington, April 27, 1962 which summarises a draft paper received entitled "Venezuela: State Department Guidelines for Policy and Operations", Pol 32-1 Guyana-Venezuela, RG59.

documents which demonstrate its concerns about its internal communist problems.¹³⁷ Moreover, the government in Caracas may also have been motivated by the need to act before BG's independence. Its adversary would then have been Britain as opposed to the perceived image problems it may have when resurrecting the claim against a weaker adversary. This was admitted by the Venezuelan delegate to the UN in 1962: "He [the Venezuelan delegate to the UN] said that the Venezuelans had made a public move now because they thought that any move after independence would lay them open to accusation of bullying a small country."¹³⁸ Certainly, the Betancourt government was motivated to get the issue raised before Britain granted BG independence. A memo of a conversation with a Venezuelan First Secretary in Washington, dated 12 September 1962 states:

"...Venezuela has placed the boundary question on the agenda of the forthcoming Seventeenth General Assembly as a means of bringing it before world public opinion. Through this device it hopes to exert pressure on the British to get the latter to agree to negotiate a revision prior to granting independence to British Guiana."¹³⁹

Some theories have been proffered by British diplomats about the motivations of Caracas: "The Venezuelan Government's present initiative no doubt has been inspired by recent events in S.E. Asia, but may also be designed to divert attention from President Betancourt's present internal difficulties."¹⁴⁰ The official Venezuelan explanation for

¹³⁵ From Roger Hilness to Mr. Martin, Latin America Policy Committee, 28/5/62, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹³⁶ Mr Barall to Mr. McGhee, January 31, 1962, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹³⁷ They are "Defensa Contra La Subversión e Intervención del Comunismo Internacional", MRE (1963), pp.76-77; "Comisión Consultiva Sobre Asuntos Relativos a la Adopción de Medidas de Seguridad contra la acción Subversiva del comunismo internacional", *ibid.*, pp78-79; and "Comisión Especial de Consulta Sobre Seguridad Contra la Acción Subversiva de Comunismo Internacional", *ibid.*, pp.79-80.

¹³⁸ British Embassy, Caracas, to Foreign Office, 23 August 1962, FO 371/162668.

¹³⁹ US State Department Records Relating to Venezuela 1960-1963, 47.3 US-Venezuela Trade, 1962 to FT 18 Munitions Control 1963, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁴⁰ Hankey to Crowe, January 17, 1962, FO 371/162663. Again repeated by Hankey on 22 January 1962..

reopening the dispute was of course the evidence that had come to light in Mallet-Prevost's posthumous memorandum.¹⁴¹

Yet more theories exist. As part of the location of the reopening within the framework of Anglo-American diplomacy, Joseph tackles indirectly the issue of whether it was the US which had instigated Venezuelan action given the former's interest in destabilizing British Guiana's Jagan. Such a premise has, of course, been made by the PPP over the years.¹⁴² No declassified material has so far confirmed the PPP's theory in absolute terms. However, Joseph has identified a State Department paper dated 15 March 1963, which shows clearly that the Venezuelan issue had become caught up in the US/British actions to delay independence for BG in order to prevent a PPP government. In the paper entitled, "Possible courses of action in British Guiana", one of the means stated is a "thorough airing of the Venezuelan claim"¹⁴³ as a mechanism to delay British Guiana's independence. Joseph was unable to gain further insight into this possible link between US action and the Venezuelan claim since this topic could not be gleaned from the other declassified documents. As he deduces aptly, "No other reference to this latter device is available in the unclassified documentation but the significance of its consideration is inescapable."¹⁴⁴ Joseph argues further:

"Indeed the timing of the reopening of the border issue by Venezuela, apart from the contemporaneity of the impending Independence of British Guiana constitutes good reason for a related examination into factors of hemispheric

¹⁴¹ In writing about possible Venezuelan motives, it should be noted that the writer did not gain access to the archives of the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry's Frontiers Department which are retained in that department rather than kept in the Foreign Ministry's central archives.

¹⁴² See for instance, Jagan (1984).

¹⁴³ Paper no.272 prepared by the State Department, 15 March 1962 and cited in Joseph (1998), p.32.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph (1998), p.32.

bearing."¹⁴⁵

Apart from the actions of the US government against the PPP government, a statement of the UK's representative to the UN, Gore, would probably have set the alarm bells ringing in the ears of the PPP government about where Washington stood. "The United States also looked forward with anticipation to the day when an independent British Guiana with a freely elected non-totalitarian government representing all the races there could be welcomed to the United Nations."¹⁴⁶ This was an unambiguous indication of the US's dislike for the Jagan-led government and it contrasts with the US's courting of the Betancourt regime which, like the US, feared the communist threat. Indeed the two governments issued a joint communiqué on 17 December 1961 in which they reaffirmed their friendship and cooperation in areas such as the Alliance for Progress and economic cooperation.¹⁴⁷ However, confirmation of whether the US instigated Venezuela to reopen the dispute will have to remain a hypothesis until all the relevant files become available.

We turn now to the second question: why did Britain agree to an examination after being initially resolute against any such action and fully cognizant of its ramifications? Ince in his 1970 article argued that Britain had agreed to an examination of the documents after coming under pressure in the UN.¹⁴⁸ This argument is also made in the available documents of the US State Department archives. Recording a conversation between the staff of the British and US embassies in Caracas, the memo dated 10 August

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.36.

¹⁴⁶ UN (1962b).

¹⁴⁷ "Comunicado Conjunto del Presidente Romulo Betancourt de Venezuela y del Presidente John F. Kennedy de los Estados Unidos de América", Caracas, December 17 1961, MRE Archivo Central, Expediente No.7, 1961, Interior.

1965 notes, "Edmonds [British Embassy, Caracas] said the British decision to agree to discuss the dispute - he stressed that there was no agreement to negotiate, only that there was evidence - had been motivated by a desire 'to help Betancourt through a difficult year'." Crucially, the memo adds in parenthesis, "(Edmonds did not say that it was designed to get Britain off the spot in the Special Political Committee)."¹⁴⁹ While this argument seems credible, it will probably not be confirmed until the relevant PRO documents are declassified.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, based on the available documents which show that Kennedy was anxious for BG's independence to be delayed, Joseph has argued that it was within this context that Britain's decision to offer a tripartite examination must be placed. "It was this highly charged milieu which defined British policy to commence negotiations on the arrangements for a tripartite study of the documents, or in the State Department's projection, 'a thorough airing of the Venezuelan claim'."¹⁵¹

We return now to our third question: what took place during the re-examination of the documents? We already have some indication of the developments, as a result of the Venezuelan publication MRE (1967). In the available Foreign Office records, there is an indication that the tripartite examination may have been little more than a procedural arrangement along the path of reopening the dispute, especially as far as the Venezuelan government was concerned, as one document indicates: "The Tripartite examination was

¹⁴⁸ Ince (1970), p.14.

¹⁴⁹ Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁵⁰ It is not possible to gain a broader insight into the behind the scenes diplomatic negotiations of this period in the PRO, as a number of files still remain closed. Even in those files which are open, some documents have been retained in the Department of origin and may, therefore, never be available for public perusal. For instance in file FO 371/162669, at least six documents have been retained in the department of origin. In file FO 371/162670, at least three documents have been closed until 2013. From what this writer can deduce these documents, especially AV1081/133, hold the despatches about the decision of HMG to propose a tripartite examination of the documents in response to Venezuela's raising of the issue. This writer's research at the PRO was completed in 2001, three years after that of Joseph's (1998).

in any case a 'farce' as far the Venezuelans were concerned as they had already spent many years pursuing all the relevant British documents..."¹⁵² Beyond this statement and the details in MRE (1967), not much more can be gauged from the available PRO files at this stage.

In attempting to answer our final question - Why the Geneva Agreement? - we need to recall that at the December 1964 elections, the PPP was defeated following the change of the electoral system from first-past-the-post to proportional representation and the PNC in coalition with the UF, took the reigns of power. The December examination of documents was therefore occurring at the time of the coalition government headed by Burnham. The US and Britain had succeeded in removing the threat posed by Jagan's Marxist-inspired PPP government. The available US and British documents point to the importance of Burnham not only in Anglo-American diplomacy, but also in Anglo-American-Venezuelan considerations over him, in determining the course of the dispute. The US State Department records sum up the favourable light with which Venezuela viewed Burnham. "When Burnham took office in British Guiana in December 1964, the immediate concern [of Venezuela] over the communist problem was relieved."¹⁵³ The memo also records that Burnham was invited by Venezuela's president Leoni to visit Venezuela and notes that there followed a period of growing friendly relations between British Guiana and Venezuela."¹⁵⁴ Another State Department telegram that records a conversation with the Venezuelan foreign minister, Iribarren Borges, gives further insight

¹⁵¹ Joseph (1998), p.33.

¹⁵² "Comments on Record of Discussions on Venezuelan-British Guiana Boundary Dispute on 9-10 December 1965", FO 371/185061.

¹⁵³ Memo from Samuel D.Eaton to Mr Vaughn, 19 July 1965, Pol 32-1 op.cit.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

into how Burnham was perceived in Caracas. "FONMIN said he thought there was chance of resolving dispute because (1) area claimed is 'almost completely unpopulated' and (2) Government of Venezuela was most sympathetic to Burnham Government, wanted only friendliest relations, and was prepared extend political and economic 'under proper circumstances'."¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to observe that the Burnham factor is not covered by Joseph (1998).¹⁵⁶ Rather, he identifies a number of factors behind the British government's actions. "It is submitted that the intensity of the pressures from all quarters on the British Government and its strong inclination to get out of British Guiana and grant Independence earlier rather than later, stimulated the drift towards "talks" and "negotiations" with Venezuela."¹⁵⁷ Joseph's analysis therefore excludes the involvement of the premier in Georgetown.

In one of his early ministerial speeches, Ramphal declared that not only was the Geneva Agreement inevitable after the earlier decision on the documents, but that it "...became a requisite to independence..."¹⁵⁸ It may be stated more accurately as being the price that Burnham was prepared to pay in order to lead BG to independence. The contention in this thesis is that Burnham was anxious to have some sort of settlement before independence for his own expediency. A State Department telegram of 8 December 1965 records that "He [Burnham] has told the British he would prefer to deal with Venezuela's claim later'. Piper [Colonial Office] assumes this means after independence when Burnham thinks he can more effectively put the screws on Jagan thus

¹⁵⁵ Telegraph 116, 31 July 1965, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁵⁶ In fairness to Joseph, he relied on State Department records declassified and reprinted in the *Stabroek News* newspaper in 1996 and so may not have had access to the same records as this writer.

¹⁵⁷ Joseph (1998), pp.38-39.

¹⁵⁸ MEA (1970), p.11.

providing himself more elbow room for handling the dispute." Moreover, Burnham's position was based on his perception of the case with which he could win the support of the Afro-Asian lobby in a multilateral context as a key part of the government's international approaches to the controversy. The same despatch notes, "After independence he can also enlist Afro-Asian sympathy by direct lobbying in UN General Assembly."¹⁵⁹ As will be discussed from chapters 3-6, this aspect - utilising the UN - was to become an essential feature of Burnham's post-independence handling of the controversy. For now, we should also note that the US was keen for a solution before independence. A State Department memo notes, "I think that in this instance we should urge both the UK and the Venezuelans to expedite a solution so that the claim will not be hanging over the colony when independence is achieved."¹⁶⁰ Such a viewpoint can perhaps be read in the context of the US wanting to minimize problems for someone - Burnham - whom they had helped into power. A similar perspective existed on the British side. During the December 9, 1965 talks which led to the decision to hold further talks in Geneva, the Venezuelan Foreign Minister was warned by the British Secretary of State about the dangers for Burnham if Venezuela was to press its claim. "He [Michael Stewart] also referred to the dangers which could result if, by pressing their claim, the Venezuelans

¹⁵⁹ Telegram 2615, 8 December 1965, Pol 32-1 op.cit.

¹⁶⁰ From John Leddy to Mr Vaughn, August 5, 1965, Pol 32-1 op.cit.

were to create political difficulties for Mr Burnham."¹⁶¹ US, British and even Venezuelan considerations of preventing a communist-led government in BG and thus the necessity not to do any damage to the Burnham government's own considerations were key factors behind the negotiations that led to Geneva.

It was during the talks on 9-10 December 1965 that Burnham, British Guiana and Venezuela had discussed their respective proposals for taking the dispute forward. Amongst the proposals from the latter was the establishment of a mixed commission. This was carried forward for discussion at the Geneva talks: "A mixed commission should be set up to solve the territorial controversy, to formulate plans for collaboration in the development of Essequibian Guyana and British Guiana, and to carry out these plans."¹⁶²

The British proposal at the talks was for an Antarctic-type treaty hold on claims for a fixed number of years appears to have been influenced by Burnham's refusal to go along with their preferred proposal.

"By far the best solution would have been for Her Majesty's Government to offer to refer to the International Court of Justice the question of the validity of the 1899 Award. Unfortunately Mr Burnham refused to go along with this and we were therefore obliged to fall back on trying to save the Venezuelans' face by means of an Antarctic-type freezing of claims..."¹⁶³

It is interesting that Burnham did not want the matter referred to the ICJ when the US State Department's own thorough assessment of all the issues raised by Venezuela

¹⁶¹ "Record of Discussions Between the Foreign Secretary, The Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Premier of British Guiana at the Foreign Office on 9 December 1965", FO 371/185062.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ From Foreign Office to Ward, British Embassy Rome, 4 February 1966, FO 371/185062.

concluded that Venezuela's case would be weak before the ICJ.¹⁶⁴ Although no reasoning was given, a State Department memo of 28 January 1965 was also against recommending that the issue be referred to this international judicial body. "I agree...that we should not, at this time, suggest to the UK or to Venezuela that the boundary dispute issue be referred to another arbitration tribunal or the ICJ."¹⁶⁵ The question that remains – which this writer is unable to answer – is whether the similarity of Burnham's views with the State Department was merely coincidental!

On another level, however, Burnham's reluctance to take the controversy before the ICJ can be understood in the context of the uncertainties a court case would introduce into any dispute. As Francis has contended of border disputes in general:

"There is a temptation to say that an easy way out of the dilemma is to submit the dispute to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice, since border disputes could be resolved by strict application of law. This could mean that there will be a winner and a loser. Herein lies the problem. Few states after holding tenaciously to a claim, will be prepared to submit it to third-party settlement and risk losing everything."¹⁶⁶

Guyana's attorney-general at the time, Shridath Ramphal, has expressed similar views with regards to the territorial controversy of his country with Venezuela: "You could never be certain in a court. That is the whole point of a court case. There is always that element of doubt and of course it is a doubt that lingered with the Venezuelans. They

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum, September 7, 1965 with attached analysis "The Venezuela-British Guiana Boundary Dispute in the International Court of Justice", Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum from Mr Adams to CV, Mr Margolies, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁶⁶ Francis in Bryan et al (1990), p.227.

weren't rushing to the International Court."¹⁶⁷ The record of a meeting between Burnham and the British prime minister in 1969, Harold Wilson, gives indication of the Guyanese leader's same concern about the uncertainties of the ICJ, especially regarding Latin American disputes. "In reply to a question Burnham also made clear his reluctance to take his case to the International Court. He said that past experience of the handling by the Court of Inter-Latin American disputes was not encouraging."¹⁶⁸ The possibility of a prejudicial outcome to its case, therefore, served as a reason for the GOG's reluctance towards taking the controversy to the ICJ.

With all parties concerned agreed on the need to find a solution before independence, difficulties on what form that solution would take were manifested at the Geneva talks. "The difficulties remained formidable. Neither side could afford to yield an inch on its legal position."¹⁶⁹ The outcome was thus viewed by Britain in the following terms: "We regard the Agreement as an honourable compromise between two diametrically opposed points of view."¹⁷⁰

Venezuela's Claims for Nullifying the 1899 Award

It is worth us summarising Venezuela's claims for the nullity of the 1899 award. These positions, which have been refined since the reopening of the dispute in 1962 and as Venezuela has found new evidence in the archives that, in its opinion backs up its claims, have continued to be a mainstay in Venezuela's position. That is, more than 100

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Shridath Ramphal, 23 March 2000.

¹⁶⁸ A.M. Palliser, PM's Office to DJD Maitland, FCO, 17 January 1969 (summary of a meeting between British and Guyanese PM on 16 January 1969), PREM 13/269.

¹⁶⁹ Foreign Office to British Embassy, Caracas, 25 February 1966, FO 371/185063.

years after the Paris Award was supposed to have settled the dispute forever. We now present a summary of Venezuela's claims.¹⁷¹

1. *Venezuela's position on the Schomburgk Line is as follows:*

- (a) the 1835 Schomburgk Line is the true line which shows the Essequibo River as the boundary;
- (b) the 1840 map is thus referred to as the "pseudo" Schomburgk Line; and
- (c) Britain is said to have subsequently falsified maps to show expanded claims to territory as the mineral wealth of the disputed area became known.

2. *Venezuela claims it was:*

- (a) excluded from the negotiations between Britain and the US on the terms of the treaty;
- (b) forced under pressure from the US to accept the terms of the treaty negotiated between Britain and the US; and
- (c) not allowed to nominate any of its nationals onto the Tribunal.

3. *Venezuela claims the award is null and void because the 1899 Award was:*

- (a) not based on law but rather the result of a compromise obtained by a political deal;
- (b) the boundary line adopted was not only forced upon the Arbitrators, but is supposed to have been prepared in the Foreign Office months before the Award was made;
- (c) the Arbitrators did not use the international legal principle of *uti possidetis juris* in making the award and also did not stipulate how the 50-year prescription title adopted was to be computed;
- (d) the Paris Tribunal exceeded its powers by stipulating about free access on the Barima and Amacuro Rivers, which was outside of its remit;
- (e) no reasons were given by the Arbitrators for their decisions.

4. *On the demarcation of the boundary, Venezuela asserts:*

- (a) it was pressurized to demarcate the boundary in 1905 in accordance with the 1899 Award in view of a threatened unilateral demarcation by Britain;

5. *The reasons why Venezuela delayed voicing its objections internationally are:*

- (a) its endogenous political difficulties and being a weak country at the time of the Award, nevertheless, successive generations of Venezuelans have been taught about the injustices of the award; and
- (b) it was only able to substantiate its objections with evidence following the release of foreign office documents at the PRO and the private papers of those involved in the Award.

¹⁷⁰ Foreign Office and Commonwealth Relations Office to certain missions, 21 February 1966, FO371/185063. See the same document for details on how the compromise agreement was reached.

¹⁷¹ This summary of Venezuela's claims is taken from "Report on the Boundary Question with British Guiana submitted to the National Government by the Venezuela Experts" (1967) and MRE (2000b).

A point by point rebuttal of the above claims has been made by Britain.¹⁷² Some writers have also criticised the Venezuelan standpoint from different stances. Joseph, whose two articles (1970) and (1971) analyse the arguments and evidence presented by both sides at the 1899 tribunal, refutes Venezuela's claims of a diplomatic compromise based on the Mallet-Prevost memorandum. He argues that although there was compromise, it was not of a diplomatic nature, but rather it was of a form essential in such a complex case. Braveboy-Wagner (1984) analyses the legal issues surrounding the case and concludes that Guyana's position is stronger legally. Some publications, especially those from Venezuela, back that country's claims.¹⁷³ One non-Venezuelan writer, Betty Jane Kissler, who analysed the validity of Venezuela's arguments for her PhD concludes, "Venezuela appears to have a valid case to ask for the negotiation of a different boundary".¹⁷⁴ However, since Kissler's analysis was based - by her own admission - on an analysis of Venezuelan documents only in the absence of the availability of PRO documents, her analysis is questionable.

Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to trace the history of the Venezuelan-British Guiana boundary dispute from its origins to settlement in the nineteenth century and its re-opening by Venezuela in the latter half of the twentieth century. The dispute-cum-controversy has many facets, too numerous to analyse fully here. Suffice to say, I have

¹⁷² Full details can be found in FO 371/185062.

¹⁷³ See chapter 5, "The Dispute: Legal Aspects", pp.111-129, of her book. By far the most comprehensive of the many Venezuelan publications on the issue is the foreign ministry of Venezuela's prolific collection of documents, MRE (2000b).

¹⁷⁴ Kissler (1971), p.271.

identified the key factors of why the boundary between Venezuela and Guyana has not been mutually settled – as far as Venezuela is concerned - and continues to be at the centre of relations between two countries, one hundred years after the Paris settlement of 1899. This therefore is the basis for this analysis from chapters 3-6 of Guyana's foreign policy and its relations with Venezuela. Specifically, I have looked at how the dispute-cum-controversy was intricately linked to British Guiana's decolonization politics. In this regard, I have argued about the significance not only of Anglo-American and Anglo-Venezuelan diplomacy, but the key and overlooked role played by Burnham. His perceptions about the ease with which the support of the Afro-Asian lobby could be obtained provides the genesis of the international approaches of the government of Guyana from 1966 to 1992, which I will analyze in chapters 3-6.

Chapter 3:

The Burnham/D'Aguiar Coalition Years 1964-1968: the Era of Heightened Tensions between Guyana and Venezuela

Guyana's Relations with Venezuela

The coalition government of the UF and the PNC first assumed power following the December 1964 elections during the period of internal self-government. The leaders of that coalition government were Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham and Peter D'Aguiar of the PNC and UF respectively. Our focus begins at independence since this is the time when the coalition government assumed responsibility for external affairs from Britain. Reference, will however, be made to relevant and key events which preceded the granting of independence.

When the colony of British Guiana gained its independence on 26 May 1966, Venezuela offered recognition of that independence, but made an important reservation. As the Venezuelan foreign minister declared at the UN:

"Por lo tanto, Venezuela reconoce como territorio del Nuevo Estado el que se sitúa al Este de la margen derecha del río Esequibo, y reitera ante el Nuevo país, y ante la comunidad internacional, que se reserva expresamente sus derechos de soberanía territorial sobre toda la zona que se encuentra a la margen izquierda del precitado río; en consecuencia, el territorio de la Guayana Esequiba sobre el cual Venezuela se reserva expresamente sus derechos soberanos, limita al Este con el Nuevo Estado de Guyana, a través de la línea media del río Esequibo, tomado éste desde su nacimiento hasta su desembocadura en el Océano Atlántico." ¹

A similar, emphatic and unambiguous statement regarding Venezuela's position on Essequibo was made by that state's representative at the Security Council on 21 June 1966.² The end of colonialism in Guyana came with a reminder that the territorial controversy between Guyana and Venezuela would be significant in determining relations between the two states.

¹ "Reconocimiento de Guyana por parte del Gobierno de Venezuela", MRE, File: Guyana, Expediente, No.2-66.

² Speech in MRE (1967b), pp.111-115.

Prior to independence, two actions undertaken by Venezuela since its re-opening of the dispute at the UN in 1962 sent clear signals to Georgetown of the seriousness with which Venezuela viewed its attempts to claim the Essequibo territory. The Venezuelan government, by its own admission, was active in securing the 1964 Act of Washington, which prohibited countries like Guyana and later Belize from joining the OAS because of territorial problems with existing members. Venezuela made no secret of its involvement in securing this Act as the following extract indicates:

"Por iniciativa de Venezuela, y de otros países latinoamericanos, que mereció la probación unánime de la Primera Conferencia Interamericana Extraordinaria de la OEA (Washington, diciembre de 1964), se incluyó en el 'Acta de Washington' una disposición que establece lo siguiente: 'Que el Consejo de la Organización no tomará decisión sobre solicitud alguna de admisión presentado por una entidad política cuyo territorio esté sujeto, total o parcialmente y con anterioridad a la fecha de la presente resolución, a litigio o reclamación entre un país extracontinental y uno o más Estados miembros de la Organización, mientras no se haya puesto fin a la controversia mediante procedimiento pacífico'." ³

The 1964 Act of Washington had implications not only for Guyana-Venezuela relations, but also had wider hemispheric resonance. For instance, the Act prevented a resort to the OAS's mechanisms for conflict resolution, should such facilities be required, due to a failure of the Mixed Commission between Guyana and Venezuela that had been established by the terms of the Geneva Agreement and whose task it was to find a solution initially. The Act also meant that Guyana was excluded from the inter-American security mechanism since this was administered through the OAS. ⁴

The other Venezuelan action prior to Guyana's independence was the publication in 1965 of a map by the Dirección de Cartografía del Ministerio de Obras Públicas with

³ MRE (1969), p.xxxi.

⁴ For details of the OAS's conflict resolution mechanisms, see Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.25-36.

the attachment to Venezuela's territory of the largest of Guyana's three counties, Essequibo. The area claimed by Venezuela, has been depicted as a "Zona en Reclamación" on that country's map which was launched at a press conference on 2 February 1965.⁵

Guyana's relations with Venezuela during the coalition years may be described as fraught, as tensions mounted in response to Venezuela's actions. I begin examining relations in this period by focussing on the Mixed and Sub-Commissions. In the first instance, relations between the two states were formally laid down under the terms of the pre-independence Geneva Agreement, which was signed by the coalition government, Venezuela and Britain. Under this Agreement, it was agreed in Article 1 that:

"A Mixed Commission shall be established with the task of seeking satisfactory solutions for the practical settlement of the controversy between Venezuela and the United Kingdom which has arisen as a result of the Venezuelan contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899 about the frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela is null and void."⁶

The Agreement, therefore, provided a formal forum for the pursuit of an end of the problem between Guyana and Venezuela.

The first meeting of the Mixed Commission took place shortly after independence from 2-4 July 1966 in Caracas.⁷ It was perhaps no accident that the Venezuelan delegation arrived in Georgetown for the second meeting of the Mixed Commission aboard a naval destroyer, the "Almirante Brion", thereby demonstrating Venezuela's

⁵ US Embassy, Caracas to State Department, 10 February 1965, Pol 32-1 Guyana-Venezuela, RG59. See Appendix 4 for a Venezuelan map which continues to show Essequibo as the "Zona en Reclamación", one hundred years after the 1899 Paris settlement.

⁶ See Appendix 5 for the full text of the Geneva Agreement.

⁷ MRE (1967a). See also Braveboy-Wagner (1984), chapter 8, pp.149-180, on the dates of the meetings of the Mixed Commission.

naval supremacy vis-a-vis Guyana.⁸ Tensions between the two states over the terms of the Mixed Commission soon became evident.⁹ Those tensions centred on Article 1 of the Geneva Agreement which appears to have been worded in deliberately vague diplomatic language in order to make it acceptable to all signatories. In doing so, this made the Agreement open to different interpretations by different parties involved. Thus on the one hand, the GOG interpreted Article 1 to mean that its Venezuelan counterpart has to prove first that the Award is null and void before any discussions of a settlement can take place:

"The language of this provision does not admit to ambiguity. It must be clear to anyone reading it with detachment, and not bent on misrepresenting its meaning that the issue which the Mixed Commission was established to settle was whether, as the Venezuelans contended, the Arbitral Award was a nullity. Guyana has at all times been willing to examine this matter in depth with a view to securing a practical settlement of the controversy..."¹⁰

The Venezuelan government, on the other hand, argued that the mere signing of the Geneva Agreement is recognition of the existence of a controversy and thus the purpose of the Mixed Commission is to find a solution:

"El Acuerdo de Ginebra de febrero de 1966 significa: a) el reconocimiento por parte de Inglaterra y Guayana Británica, de la controversia existente entre esos dos países y Venezuela como consecuencia de nuestra reclamación...No sólo reconoce el Acuerdo de Ginebra la controversia, sino que además acepta la necesidad de resolverla y fija los procedimientos conducentes."¹¹

With such differing interpretations it would probably have been evident that the Mixed Commission's task would result in failure.

⁸ *Guyana Graphic*, 12 September 1966, p.16.

⁹ Although Britain was a signatory to the Geneva Agreement, the Mixed Commission's meetings were only attended by Guyanese and Venezuelan representatives.

¹⁰ "Statement on Guyana-Venezuela Relations by the Prime Minister of Guyana, The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, to the National Assembly (and later circulated to UN representatives), 12th July 1968" in IIR (1970), p.720.

¹¹ MRE (1969), p.xxxi.

The Mixed Commission included a spin-off, known as the Sub-Commission, which first met in February 1968. As one FCO telegram records: "The idea of joint development was proposed as a means of showing some progress and a joint Sub-Commission was set up."¹² It provided the framework to discuss and develop relations outside of the territorial controversy, namely "mutual economic and cultural co-operation between Venezuela and Guyana and to remove the sensitive issue of joint economic development of the disputed territory from the agenda of the Mixed Boundary Commission."¹³ Separating such issues by creating a new body did not advance the discussions between the two states, since both sides continued to have differing views on the terms of any joint development: the Guyana side wanting joint development to relate to its own Development Plan and thus effectively the whole of Guyana, while the Venezuelans wanted it to relate exclusively to Essequibo.¹⁴ As such, the life of the Sub-Commission was relatively ephemeral since it came to a de facto end when the Venezuelans withdrew from that body at the end of its second meeting on 4 July 1968.¹⁵

Conflict Outside the Framework of the Geneva Agreement

The Raúl Leoni government in Venezuela (1964-1968), which succeeded the Betancourt administration, took a tough stance on the dispute-cum-controversy. This hard-line approach, which is evident in a number of actions, should probably be understood, as one Venezuelan diplomat has argued, in the context of Venezuelan

¹² FCO Guidance telegram no.194, 25 July 1968, PREM 13/2699.

¹³ *Guyana Graphic*, 4 June 1968, p.1.

¹⁴ *Guyana Graphic*, 7 July 1968, p.1. Also interview with Harry Dyett, one of Guyana's representatives on the Sub-Commission, 13 December 1999.

democracy being in its infancy. The military, which had given up power in 1958 still had some influence in the territorial issue with Guyana.¹⁶

On the surface, the Leoni government's aggressive stance translated into Venezuelan occupation of the Guyanese half of Ankoko island which is located at the junction of the Cuyuni and Wenamu rivers. This island had been divided roughly in half between Guyana and Venezuela by the 1905 demarcation of the boundary.¹⁷ The announcement of Venezuela's occupation of Guyana's territory was made on 14 October 1966, approximately one month after the second meeting of the Mixed Commission. According to Burnham, "some time during last month a number of Venezuelans crossed into the Guyanese side [of Ankoko] and have since been carrying out certain works on our territory."¹⁸ While the Venezuelan occupation of the Guyanese half of Ankoko has not been disputed, questions were raised as to the timing of Burnham's announcement, namely whether his motive was an attempt to delay the withdrawal of British troops. The PPP, for instance, while supporting the government's opposition to this Venezuelan action raised the issue of whether there was a link between the coalition government's announcement and the timing of the withdrawal of the British army:

"The People's Progressive Party, in a prepared statement issued on Saturday, October 15, supported the Government's opposition to the Venezuelan aggression but expressed the hope that the affair was not a manoeuvre to retain in Guyana the British troops which were due to be withdrawn at the end of that month."¹⁹

¹⁵ *Guyana Graphic*, 7 July 1968, p.1. Also "Statement on Guyana-Venezuela Relations by the Prime Minister of Guyana, The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, to the National Assembly", 12 July 1968 in IIR (1970). See also Guidance telegram no. 194, op. cit. and MRE (1969).

¹⁶ Interview with José Quintero, 21 February 2000.

¹⁷ The Venezuelan government's response of 18 October 1966 to the government of Guyana's protest states that Ankoko was always part of Venezuela's sovereignty - document no.5, MRE (1998), pp.336-341. From the description of the 1905 demarcation in which Venezuela participated, the island was divided between Guyana and Venezuela, MFA (1984b).

¹⁸ Script of Burnham's radio broadcast, 14 October 1966, printed in Hubbard (1967), pp.42-44.

¹⁹ Hubbard (1967), p.45.

Similarly, the Venezuelan publication *La República* also queried whether Burnham's announcement was linked to the withdrawal of British troops.²⁰

Whatever the motive behind the coalition government's announcement, the majority of British troops withdrew as planned, save for senior officers, such as colonel Ronald Pope who remained to head the local army in its infancy. Protests from the PNC/UF administration to Betancourt were met with the firm stance from the latter that Ankoko was and is an integral part of Venezuela.²¹ Moreover, the Venezuelan government went on to suggest:

"...si el Honorable Gobierno de Guyana tuviera alguna reclamación que formular, deberá hacerlo a través de la Comisión Mixta creada al efecto por el Acuerdo de Ginebra, el 17 de febrero de 1966, de conformidad con los dispuestos en el parrafo II, del artículo 5, del mismo Tratado."²²

This attempt to bring Ankoko within the framework of the Mixed Commission was strongly resisted by the government in Georgetown which gave specific instructions to its members in the Commission not to discuss the issue within that forum.²³ As such, any bargaining position that Venezuela may have hoped to gain in the negotiation process from its total occupation of the river island was lost after the GOG's refusal to include the issue on the agenda of the Mixed Commission.

With one side insisting that Ankoko be discussed by the Mixed Commission and the other that it be discussed outside of that body, the island became and continues to be a potent, if not problematic symbol, of the territorial controversy. As far as successive

²⁰ Reported in *Guyana Graphic*, 20 October 1966, p.1.

²¹ "No.5, Nota de Iganacio Iribarren Borges para Linden Forbes Burnham, 18 October 1966", MRE (1998), pp.336-337.

²² Ibid. See MEA (1966), for details of the government of Guyana's protest to the Venezuelan government.

²³ *Guyana Graphic*, 12 November 1966, p.1.

governments of Guyana have been concerned, the symbolism of Ankoko continues to be of significance. In this respect, it should be noted that the Venezuelan Defence Minister, General Ramón Florencio Gómez, was reported to have converted the island into a Venezuelan military base.²⁴ The Chief of Staff of the GDF who described Ankoko as still being "a major issue" stated that at the time of the announcement of its occupation, "in the eyes of people like Forbes Burnham and Shridath Ramphal (Guyana's Prime Minister and Minister of State, both with foreign policy portfolios), they felt that the GDF was not a year old at the time and by no stretch of the imagination could the GDF take on the Venezuelan armed forces."²⁵ It can be argued that Venezuela's continued occupation of the whole of Ankoko is a demonstration of its relative military strength and a symbol of its "reclamación" policy.²⁶

Other Problematic Issues

The Act of Washington, which by Venezuela's admission prevented Guyana from joining the OAS, was also used to exclude Georgetown from being a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, also known as the Latin American Denuclearisation Treaty of 14 February 1967. It can be argued that Guyana's exclusion from this treaty would not have amounted to much in terms of the resulting nuclear threat posed by that state. But the significance laid in the fact that the GOG had once again been excluded from a regional

²⁴ Ibid., 19 October 1967, p.20.

²⁵ Interview with Joe Singh, 10 December 1999. The GDF was formed on 1 November 1965.

²⁶ In this respect, it is interesting to note that a senior Venezuelan foreign ministry official admitted to this writer in an anonymous interview that Venezuela was wrong to occupy Guyana's half of Anacoco, as the Venezuelans call the island. To the best of this writer's knowledge, however, such a perspective has never been made the official Venezuelan position.

body by virtue of its territorial controversy with Venezuela.²⁷ Guyana's exclusion from a treaty designed to prevent the regional proliferation of nuclear weapons would have been viewed - although not expressly so - as a triumph for Venezuela in the controversy with that state.

Tensions between Georgetown and Caracas continued to rise when in April 1967, the Guyanese government accused a Venezuelan diplomat of engaging in subversive activity among Guyana's Amerindian population. This followed a Conference of Amerindian Chiefs in the Kabakaburi area of the Essequibo region claimed by Venezuela in which the Chiefs were said to have been "...induced to pass a resolution favouring joint development of the disputed border area..."²⁸ The Guyanese Government accused Venezuela of actually organising the meeting of the Chiefs. In his speech to the National Assembly on the issue, Ramphal said:

"Do they expect us to ignore the purposes that lay behind the irregular activities of Snr. Taylhardat, who as a Second Secretary at the Venezuelan Embassy in Guyana, was responsible for organising and financing a clandestine meeting of Amerindian tribes in Guyana and attempting to induce them to express support for the Venezuelan claim."²⁹

The resolution passed by the Chiefs was clearly one to be capitalised on by Venezuela in the controversy, as the following explanation by its MRE indicates:

"Conferencia de la 'Asociación Amerindia de Guayana celebrada en la aldea de Cabacaburi, Distrito de Pomerón de la Guayana Esequiba, en la cual se plantea la inequidad de independizarse del Estado guyanés, ya adhierirse a la posición Venezolana de reclamar el Esequibo. Este movimiento separatista creador del

²⁷ MRE (1968), pp.xviii.

²⁸ Report of an announcement made on April 14, 1967 in Hubbard (1967), pp. 56-61. See also *Sunday Graphic* report 'Venoes still Dabbling In Our Affairs', 10 March 1968, p.1. and "Statement on Guyana-Venezuela Relations by the Prime Minister of Guyana", 12 July 1968 in IIR (1970), pp.720-723.

²⁹ Extract from Ramphal's speech to the National Assembly, 17 July 1968, reprinted in *Trinidad Guardian*, 24 July 1968.

partido amerindio 'Guyana National Party' fue perseguido y excluido del sistema electoral guyanés."³⁰

Whatever the true story behind what happened at Kabakaburi, a Venezuelan Second Secretary, Leopoldo Taylhardat, was declared *persona non grata* and expelled from Guyana on 30 April 1967.³¹

The Guyanese MFA has not published figures on the economic losses resulting from Venezuela's claim to Essequibo, but it is possible to gain an insight into the economic implications of the controversy on Guyana. The country's exclusion from the OAS by virtue of the 1964 Act of Washington meant in effect that it was also barred from accessing the economic funds of bodies linked to that regional grouping, namely the Alliance for Progress and IDB. Ince, for instance, writing on Trinidad and Tobago's decision to join the OAS, states, "...the OAS as an alternative economic source to Commonwealth preferences was desirable in the eyes of the decision-makers."³² Exclusion from the OAS therefore carried economic repercussions for Guyana.

During the period of the coalition government, the Venezuelan government took two notable steps which could stymie the economic development of the Essequibo, so long as it remained under Guyanese sovereignty. These actions on the part of Caracas involved public declarations of its intent not to recognise any concessions issued for exploration, namely of oil, in the mineral-rich Essequibo:

"La Cancillería juzgó conveniente ratificar el 14 de mayo de 1968 las declaraciones de 1965, por las cuales se manifestaba que Venezuela no reconocía

³⁰ MRE (1998), p.415.

³¹ Hubbard (1967), pp.56-58; and MEA (1968c), p.60. A British citizen, Michael Wilson, was also expelled for his part in the alleged subversive activities on 27 April 1967, *ibid*.

³² Ince, pp.265-295 in Ince et al. (1986), p.281. Guyana's diplomatic machinery subsequently succeeded in gaining access to IDB funds while its bar on membership of the OAS continued until 1991 - see chapter 4 of this thesis for details.

las concesiones petroleras o de otra índole que tengan por objeto el territorio al Oeste del río Esequibo. Esta declaración de 1968 fué formulada invocando como nueva base jurídica el artículo 5° parágrafo 2° del citado convenio..."³³

Subsequently, the Leoni administration followed up this declaration by issuing an English language advertisement in the London *Times* newspaper that it would not recognise exploration concessions issued by the Guyanese government. The advert read in part:

"In view of the fact that the Essequibo Guiana is claimed by our country as by right it belongs to it, the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs publicly and categorically once more state that they do not recognise any type of such supposed concessions, either granted or to be granted by the Guyana Government over the territory stretching to the west of the Essequibo River, from its source to its mouth...These and other reservations which derive from the unwavering Venezuelan right over the Essequibo Guiana, were upheld by the Geneva Agreement (article V) of the 17th February 1966."³⁴

The Leoni government was of the view that since it did not recognize the 1899 award as valid and that also the Geneva Agreement did not prevent Venezuela from communicating its refusal to recognize concessions, it was within its rights to issue the advert.³⁵ It is possible that the advert was strategically planned since it was placed in the *Times* newspaper in June 1968 at a time when "...Guyana's Prime Minister was in London on a visit to promote investment for development..."³⁶ The coalition government responded by rejecting the advert as a form of "economic blackmail" and also wrote to the *Times* stating that the issuing of concessions was not a violation of the Geneva Agreement.³⁷

³³ See press release, "Comunicado del Gobierno de la República de Venezuela rechazando cualquier tipo de concesiones otorgadas por el Gobierno de Guyana para explotar las riquezas naturales en la zona de reclamación, Caracas, 14 de mayo de 1968, MRE (1969), p.10.

³⁴ Text of advert reprinted in the *Sunday Graphic*, June 16, 1968.

³⁵ Document no.6, MRE (1998), p.347.

³⁶ "Note: Guyana/Venezuela Relations" by Ramphal, 4 June 1969 enclosed in K.G. Ritchie, British High Commission, Georgetown, 6 June 1969, to E.A.W. Bullock, FCO, FCO 46/317.

³⁷ Ibid.

One of the most dramatic actions taken by the Leoni government and which led to a heightened state of alert in Guyana was the issue of presidential decree no.1152 by Venezuela on 9 July 1968, under which it claimed sovereignty over waters located between three and nine miles off the Essequibo coast.³⁸ The Venezuelan government's explanation was as follows:

"...el mar territorial de Guyana es de sólo tres millas y Venezuela considera suyo el territorio de la Guayana Esequiba nuestro País puede y debe con toda razón aplicar la ley [de 23 de julio de 1956 sobre Mar Teritorial, Plataforma Continental, Protección de la Pesca y Espacio Aéreo] vigente a las nueve millas de mar que nunca ha dejado de ser venezolano, mientras reserva sus derechos sobre las tres millas detentados por Guyana."³⁹

The Leoni decree, as it became known in Guyana, did not, therefore, annex the territory claimed by Venezuela, but rather moved the disputed area to the sea, thereby escalating the perception of threat in Guyana. The extent of the potential threat can be gauged in the following newspaper report:

"The decree meant that Guyana's vessels will be trespassing as soon as [sic] they sail north of the three-mile Guyanese limit, and ships sailing from Georgetown to Trinidad and the rest of the Caribbean must round the 12-mile Venezuelan limit north of the Guyanese capital in order not to enter Venezuelan waters."⁴⁰

The newspaper went on to relay the international fears generated by the decree:

"Diplomats in Caracas, particularly from the United States of America and Canada are said by the Reuter report to have expressed great concern over the outcome of the dispute which they said, had entered its very critical and dangerous state."⁴¹

The fears generated in Guyana by the Leoni decree would probably have been compounded by reports that Venezuela intended to patrol the waters claimed by the

³⁸ FCO 14/492.

³⁹ MRE (1969), p.10.

⁴⁰ *Guyana Graphic*, 11 July 1968, p.1.

⁴¹ Ibid.

decree. "A Venezuelan Navy destroyer was yesterday expected to have started patrolling the waters off the western Guyanese coast claimed by Venezuela on Wednesday, according to usually reliable military sources in Caracas." The newspaper did note further, "A source close to the Guyana Government last night said the Government had received no such report from Caracas and had no knowledge of the presence of any Venezuelan ships in Guyana waters."⁴² This was unlikely to have quelled fears in Georgetown.

Whether or not the extent of the threat was as grave as it was perceived, the government and the opposition in Guyana took the Leoni decree very seriously. In a debate in the National Assembly, Burnham declared the decree "a nullity". Further, he charged, *inter alia*, that the decree violated the Geneva Convention on the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, international law and the charter of the United Nations.⁴³ The Attorney-General and Minister of State, Shridath Ramphal, in his speech during the debate in the National Assembly drew on the implications for other states if Venezuela's action was condoned.

"Most of the world's frontiers would be thrown into chaos and confusion if all that a party to a boundary settlement needs to do to secure its revision is to allege that the settlement is not valid without being required to prove its allegation to be true."⁴⁴

Although the opposition leader, Cheddi Jagan, saw the Leoni decree and the Venezuelan controversy as a whole, to be part of a US-British-PNC conspiracy to keep the PPP out of power, the latter nevertheless supported a resolution passed unanimously in the National

⁴² *Sunday Graphic*, 14 July 1968, p.1.

⁴³ "Statement on Guyana-Venezuela Relations by the Prime Minister of Guyana, The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham to the National Assembly", 12 July 1968 in IIR (1970), pp.720-723.

⁴⁴ "Extracts from speech by The Hon. S.S. Ramphal...", p.43 in *MEA* (1968a), p.43.

Assembly in which the decree was declared a nullity and condemned it "...as an act of aggression against Guyana."⁴⁵

Apart from escalating tensions between the two states, Rout has argued that the Leoni decree had some economic ramifications, namely that Dutch Shell - one of the companies which had signed contracts for petroleum exploration by April 1965, "...chose not to exercise its option", following the decree.⁴⁶ This argument is not borne out in the declassified records of the FCO. Two press releases issued by a government department in Georgetown and contained within those files point to the companies continuing (and in one case, increasing) their operations. One notes the inverse, that is, Shell extended its explorations:

"Guyana Shell Limited, who holds Oil Exploration Licence No.205, to explore for oil over an area of approx. 9600 square miles on the off and inshore of Guyana, has gone a step further and has applied for ten prospecting licences to cover the same area held under the Oil Exploration Licence."⁴⁷

In another press release it was stated: "The Vice-President of Continental Oil Company, Mr Richard Hittle, today asked Mr Clarence Hughes, the Company's local representative, to state categorically that Continental intends continuing oil prospecting operations in Guyana".⁴⁸ By the GOG's own admission and contrary to Rout's premise, the Leoni decree did not have any adverse impact on oil exploration by multinational companies.

⁴⁵ "Note from Government of Guyana bringing to the attention of the Venezuelan Government the Resolution passed unanimously by the Guyana National Assembly condemning the decree - 19th July 1968", *ibid.*, pp.25-27.

⁴⁶ Rout (1971), p.71.

⁴⁷ Press Releases from the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, dated 24 July 1968 in FCO 23/269.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The International Approaches of the Government of Guyana

Venezuela's seeming determination to have Essequibo transferred from Guyanese territory to its sovereignty, clearly influenced the need for the GOG at independence to devise strategies in response, be they diplomatic, military or both. Two of the most significant factors determining the choice of manoeuvres to be deployed when a state is faced with threats to its territorial integrity is the relative economic and military strength. As can be seen in Table 1, Guyana was economically and militarily weaker than Venezuela, thereby making the choice of military strategies almost non-existent for the government in Georgetown. One former Guyanese army officer, Norman McLean, stresses the defensive rather than offensive role of the GDF:

"I want to emphasise that we are a defence force. We are not an army; we are not a navy; we are not an air force. We have no offensive capability...Normally when you talk about an army, it has several arms: army, navy, air force etc, each a commander-in-chief. But they have a capability to carry aggression to an enemy. In a defence force, the emphasis is on defending what is already yours, what you occupy."⁴⁹

Granger conveys the extent of the GDF's limited defence capacity at independence:

"...we [GDF] used whatever national resources we had, for example, the aircraft which lifted troops into the area [to get to the area of the border with Venezuela] was the property of Guyana Airways, a very simple six-seater sea-plane called the 'Grumman Goose'. We had to land in the river then take a boat; there was no airstrip...Our weapons were second world war weapons, they were not automatic. Our radio equipment was very backward. Basically, we were prepared for the second world war in 1966."⁵⁰

Conversely, the coalition government, which also had to respond to threats, albeit on a lesser scale, to Guyana's territorial integrity from Suriname, did not seek to internationalise the dispute with Suriname. That is, not to the same extent as the

controversy with Venezuela - since the Guyana Police Force was able to repel successfully Surinamese incursions into Guyanese territory.⁵¹

The need for the government of Guyana to devise foreign policy strategies or diplomatic initiatives in response to perceived threats from Venezuela was made even more important by the fact it had failed to secure a defence agreement with Britain or another power, as Belize was to do subsequently with Britain upon its independence in 1981.⁵² One Guyanese source states that the reason why no defence pact was secured at independence was "because no such power was willing to give such an undertaking." The source notes further, "A defence undertaking is one of the hardest of undertakings to secure and the only countries that could remotely be effective in that kind of context were Britain or the United States; and Britain as a matter of principle, as a matter of policy never did."⁵³ Indeed, evidence does exist that Burnham did raise the issue of a defence agreement during the discussions with Britain about independence. A telegram from the US embassy in Georgetown to Washington makes this clear: "It should be remembered that we have no defence agreement with Guyana, although the Prime Minister of Guyana specifically asked for one at the time of the Independence Conference in 1965 with the threat from Venezuela in mind."⁵⁴ So, it was not for want of trying that Guyana proceeded into independence without a defence agreement.

⁴⁹ Interview with Norman McLean, 4 May 2000.

⁵⁰ Interview with David Granger, 9 December 1999.

⁵¹ Searwar (interview, 8 December 1999) has argued that the Burnham government did not regard the Surinamese threat seriously, following its victories in expelling Surinamese incursions into the disputed territory in the late 1960s. See Pollard in Manigat (1977) on the history of the Guyana-Suriname border dispute. MEA (1968a), details the incidents with Suriname in the 1960s.

⁵² Menon in Institute of International Relations (1978), pp.115-145, offers a legal analysis of the Belize-Guatemala dispute.

⁵³ Anonymous interview.

⁵⁴ R.C.C. Hunte to K.T. Nash, Ministry of Defence, 31 July 1968, FCO 16/119.

The failure of the GOG to secure a defence pact with Britain, at least, was due to the latter wanting to pull out of Guyana altogether, as the sunset of the British empire had begun. This can be gleaned from the declassified State Department files: "[the] UK will not guarantee BG's borders after independence and has not interest or intention of becoming involved militarily in South America."⁵⁵ Subsequently, in a meeting between British and US diplomats, Patrick Dean, the British ambassador to Washington informed State Department officials that Britain would maintain troops in Guyana until October 1966.⁵⁶ As such, British troops only remained in Guyana for five months after independence.

Further evidence of Britain's reluctance to commit itself to the defence of Guyana in the event of a Venezuelan attack exists. When challenged in the House of Lords about whether Britain had a moral duty to defend Guyana's territory, Lord Shepherd, the FCO Minister of State, made it clear that his government was contented with Venezuela's assurances that it would not invade Guyana.⁵⁷ Given that Lord Shepherd spoke in the wake of the Leoni decree of July 1968 when tensions were at an all-time high, it becomes even clearer that Britain did not want to commit troops to Guyana. Such an argument is consistent with Payne's assertion that Britain had retreated from the Caribbean in general since the 1960s, with only some renewed interest in the region in the 1980s as a result of economic and political crises there.⁵⁸

In the absence of a defence agreement with a militarily powerful country, it is apparent that diplomacy would become the channel through which the GOG would

⁵⁵ Georgetown to State Department, 18 September 1965, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁵⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, State Department, 27 November 1965, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁵⁷ *Guyana Graphic*, 9 November 1968.

defend the state's territorial integrity. Burnham was aware of the limitations of receiving outright support from Britain and the USA. As such, his government chose the viable alternative option of lobbying for international support:

"GOG leaders have long recognized constraints on full support from US and UK and felt their only really effective defence against Venezuelan aggression is widespread international understanding and sympathy. Informing the world of their fears is thus a positive move to defend their country in their eyes. While they are aware that such moves could incite Venezuelan hawks, they see no alternative but to attempt to inhibit aggression and win international help by this means."⁵⁹

Shridath Ramphal, minister of state with responsibility for foreign affairs at independence, describes graphically the significance of foreign policy vis-à-vis Venezuela to his government: "Guyana had a cause from the beginning, the cause was its territorial integrity and that cause gave its foreign policy focus. It provided a catalyst for everything we did."⁶⁰ A subsequent Guyanese foreign minister, Rashleigh Jackson, has also commented on the centrality of territorial integrity in the foreign policy of Guyana from independence: "The question of territorial integrity and security were prime determinants of foreign policy at the beginning and have remained significant ever since."⁶¹ The strategies devised for handling the territorial controversy with the much more powerful Venezuela centred, therefore, on diplomatic initiatives. As Singh notes of the role allocated to the GDF:

"The army would be the eyes and ears while the diplomats would pursue action in the UN, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement, CARIFTA and other [international] fora. All of these fora were going to be used to articulate Guyana's

⁵⁸ Payne in Sutton (1991), pp.13-36.

⁵⁹ Telegram no.195, 26 February 1970, Georgetown to State Department, Pol 32-1 Guyana-Venezuela, op.cit.

⁶⁰ Interview with Shridath Ramphal, 23 March 2001.

⁶¹ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 30 August 1999.

position and secure the legitimacy of its frontiers, and in so doing, Venezuela would be seen as an aggressor and the brunt of world opinion would be against Venezuela."⁶²

The army's role developed, then, as an auxiliary to Guyana's foreign policy machinery. In the words of a former Guyanese ambassador, "the foreign ministry was the only line of defence [at the inception] vis-à-vis Venezuela."⁶³

The GOG's approach to the threats, real or perceived, from Venezuela, has centred on publicising the problems on the international stage with a view to winning support from the international community and in so doing providing a deterrent to Venezuela's occupation of Essequibo. The limited number of states which had diplomatic representation based in Georgetown provided some opportunity for the coalition government to lobby for international support on its home territory. This was especially noted after the Leoni decree when the Burnham administration intensified its international lobbying. The British High Commission in Georgetown was especially singled out at this time because of HMG's role as a signatory to the Geneva Agreement.⁶⁴

Although India did not have a High Commission in Guyana during the period under discussion, the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, made an official visit to Guyana at the invitation of the Guyanese government from 12-13 October 1968. Winning the support of India in the territorial controversy was important given that state's relative power among developing countries. Gandhi's visit to Guyana was clearly of significance in Guyana's politics, not only in view of the large percentage of the population of Indian descent, but also given the recent racial tensions, described in

⁶² Interview with Joe Singh, op.cit.

⁶³ Interview with Rudy Collins, 10 September 1999.

chapter 1. Searwar, whose conference paper focuses on the role of Asians in Guyana's foreign policy, elaborates that the GOG "...sought to utilise Guyana's dominant ethnic composition (East Indians and Blacks) as a source of strength rather than weakness and to project Guyana on the international stage as an Afro-Asian state." Moreover, Searwar asserts the dual benefit to Guyana both domestically and internationally, especially regarding the territorial controversy with Venezuela in the latter:

"The advantages of projecting Guyana as an Afro-Asian state were mainly two-fold, as follows (i) it was a valuable instrument promoting nation-building and cohesiveness; (ii) it enabled Guyana to mobilise support towards the maintenance of its territorial integrity, the diplomatic support of the Third World in which the Afro-Asian states continue to be a majority."⁶⁵

Gandhi's visit could therefore be seen as an endorsement by the Indian government for the Burnham regime and Guyana's territorial integrity.⁶⁶ While acknowledging that the black dominated PNC government was cognizant of its local East Indian population's ties with India in its foreign policy strategies, Ince argues that ideology was central in the relationship Guyana cultivated with India.⁶⁷

The Commonwealth

As a former British colony, Guyana was first represented as a member of the Commonwealth shortly after independence at the CHOGM held in London from 6-15 September 1966. As well as the sense of family affinity, in terms of belonging to a body made up of ex-British colonies, the principles of the Commonwealth as later enunciated

⁶⁴ "Statement in National Assembly on Guyana/Venezuela Relations, 12 July 1968" in Burnham (1970), p.169.

⁶⁵ Searwar (1989), mimeo., p.11.

⁶⁶ See communiqué issued at the end of Gandhi's visit in MEA (1968c), pp.87-88.

⁶⁷ Ince in Ince (1979), pp.218-219.

at the 1971 CHOGM would have appealed to successive Guyanese governments, given threats to its territorial integrity:

"The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace."⁶⁸

This body was to become an important plank in Guyana's foreign policy strategies against Venezuela. Indeed, during this period of the coalition, Guyana utilized the Commonwealth as part of its internationalising of the threats posed by the Leoni decree. Hence, in terms of approaches, Burnham announced, "...I am arranging for this present statement to be communicated to Member States as well as to be specifically circulated to Commonwealth governments through the Commonwealth Secretary in London."⁶⁹ This was certainly carried out by the Commonwealth Secretariat which also circulated "A Note of Protest from the Government of Guyana to the Government of Venezuela delivered on 19 July 1968" to member states.⁷⁰

Subsequently, at Guyana's annual heads of mission conference which was held from 2-5 August 1968, the strategy specifically devised for the Commonwealth - the targeting of African members of that body to support Guyana in its territorial problems with Venezuela - was elaborated:

"The Conference discussed ways and means of obtaining more specific support from Commonwealth members, particularly African members, in Guyana's struggle with Venezuela. The logistical aspects of this were regarded as especially deserving of further improvement. For example, various members of the Commonwealth - not only in Africa but also in the Caribbean - might be telling GOG either directly or via its High Commissioner in London that they

⁶⁸ CHOGM (1971), "Final Communiqué", Commonwealth Secretariat (1987), p.156.

⁶⁹ "Statement in the National Assembly on Guyana/Guyana Relations, 12 July 1968" in Burnham (1970), p.169.

⁷⁰ FCO 14/492.

fully endorsed the Guyanese position, but word to that effect was very low in trickling down to their representatives in New York, and sometimes never got there at all."⁷¹

Winning the support of the Commonwealth countries has therefore been viewed as a key element in Guyana's strategies in response to threats from Venezuela. Such an endorsement was clearly of value when Guyana submitted its application to join the United Nations. The Commonwealth states sponsored Guyana's application collectively.⁷² In a symbolic sense, the Commonwealth not only gave recognition to Guyana's sovereignty, but also served as a springboard for Guyana's entry into a world body which it later utilised in order to preserve its territorial integrity.

The United Nations

Key in the government of Guyana's initiatives to internationalise Guyana's territorial controversy with Venezuela during this period, was the UN, and specifically, the General Assembly. As was mentioned before, Guyana joined the UN shortly after independence on 20 September 1966. It was shortly after this initiation into the world body, that the GOG utilized its membership to draw international attention to Venezuela's actions against Guyana. The Ankoko issue was raised at the UN on 18 October 1966 by Guyana's permanent representative, John Carter.⁷³ The fact that the GOG utilised any available opportunity in the General Assembly to raise its problems with Venezuela is indicated by the fact that as the *Guyana Graphic* reported:

"Sir John was at the time addressing the General Assembly on a motion welcoming newly-independent Botswana and Lesotho to the UN. Sir John briefly

⁷¹ Carlson, Georgetown to Department of State, 13 August 1968, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁷² Commonwealth Secretariat (1987), p.123.

⁷³ *Guyana Graphic*, 19 October 1966, p.1.

explained the Guyana Government's attitude on the question and referred to the recent intrusion by Venezuelans into Guyanese territory on Ankoko Island."⁷⁴

In 1967, at the annual session of the General Assembly, Guyana's Attorney General and Minister of State, Shridath Ramphal, used his address to call on the world community to stand up for a principle important to Guyana in view of its territorial problems. That is, the non-acquisition of territory by force:

"...Mr President, there is one overriding principle which must not be lost sight of - it is that the acquisition of territory by force cannot and must not be condoned either individually by Member States or collectively by International Community. This principle has been reinforced by what must surely be the lesson of recent events - that recourse to force and the perpetuation of a state of war offers no solution to international disputes. The Charter of this great Organisation upholds this principle and Member States cannot afford simply to pay lip service to it."⁷⁵

Ramphal went on to convey his message in terms of the burden on development of poorer countries like Guyana facing threats to its territory:

"In the seventh decade of the twentieth century the developing nations in particular need a firm assurance - which only a keen international conscience and effective world order can provide - that they can be free to use their slender resources, both human and material in the tasks of change and improvement to which they are so inevitably committed. They need to be free of the burden of bearing arms in defence of their right to survive as sovereign states. Issues vital to the survival of the small state in many parts of the world are at stake."⁷⁶

Drawing reference specifically to his state's own predicament, Ramphal called on the UN to back the territorial integrity of small states:

"Many of us live in the shadow of territorial claims - claims often advanced by larger and more powerful neighbours - which threaten the right of small states to make their way in the world. This Organisation must stand behind the independence and the territorial integrity of all states, including those which it has helped to bring to freedom."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Address by...Ramphal... to the UN General Assembly, October 5" [1967], MEA (1968b), pp.68-74.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

In the same address, Ramphal also expressed his government's "deep disappointment" at Guyana's exclusion from the Latin American Denuclearisation Treaty as a result of the controversy with Venezuela. Similarly, Guyana's deputy permanent representative to the UN, Ann Jardim, also took the issue of Guyana's exclusion from the Treaty of Tlatelolco to the First Committee of the General Assembly, crucially calling on the group "...to vote in support of a Resolution which will enshrine that exclusionary article [of the Treaty of Tlatelolco] at the highest level in the General Assembly of this World Organisation." In calling for the Resolution against Guyana's exclusion, Jardim drew on the anachronism of her country's exclusion from a treaty aimed at achieving regional peace:

"By its very nature a resolution such as this demands acceptance of the principle of universality but this Treaty by its own provisions makes universality impossible. One would have hoped, Mr. Chairman, that the cause of World Peace would have ascended any existing and unrelated regional difficulties."⁷⁸

The outcome of the Resolution called for by the Guyanese delegation to the UN was successful in terms of the results of voting in the First Committee and the General Assembly.⁷⁹ Moreover, the Venezuelan position came under severe criticism from the African members of the UN in the General Assembly. As this FCO despatch reports:

"The Venezuela/Guyana dispute last came into the open here during the discussions at the XXIIInd General Assembly Session on the Treaty for the Denuclearisation of Latin America. On that occasion the Venezuelans went no further than refusing to abandon their claim. Even this provoked some bitter speeches from a number of Afro/Asians, and the delegations of Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania, Upper Volta and Zambia refused to vote for the endorsement of the Treaty because of the Venezuelan attitude."

⁷⁸ Extracts from Ann Jardim's speech to the First Committee of the General Assembly, 17 December 1968, MEA (1968b), pp.30-31.

⁷⁹ D.H.T. Hildyard, UK Mission, UN to P.T. Hayman, FCO, 17 June 1968 in FCO 7/1325/1.

Conveying the extent of support for Guyana amongst Afro/Asian states, the despatch further notes, "Guyana is, with the other Commonwealth Caribbean countries, by way of being almost an honorary member of the Afro/Asian group of new member nations, having so much in common with them racially, culturally and historically."⁸⁰

It can be argued that at the very least, the African representatives' position was derived from what may be deemed OAU ideology. The members of that body passed a resolution, "Border Disputes among African States" at the Cairo Summit in 1964, in which they agreed to the maintenance of the status quo of the frontiers inherited at independence. Given the potential for conflict resulting from the arbitrarily drawn colonial frontiers which split ethnic/linguistic groups between different states, the OAU's position since 1964 represented foresight about the problems that may ensue from challenges to existing borders.⁸¹ This point did not go amiss on the government of Guyana since it repeatedly called on Latin American and Caribbean states to follow the example of the OAU in accepting inherited boundaries.⁸²

In spite of the prolific condemnation of Guyana's exclusion from the Treaty, membership still appeared to be illusionary for the country:

"Despite repeated requests to the Depository Government that a date be set for Guyana to sign the treaty in conformity with General Assembly Resolution 2286 (IIXX) and the express understanding of many delegations who spoke during the debate on that resolution, Guyana has not as yet been permitted to sign."⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ For more details on the rationale for this OAU resolution and the charter of that organization see Cervenka (1968), pp.93-94 and pp.231-239 respectively.

⁸² See, for instance, Burnham (1981b), p.8.

⁸³ MEA (1968c), p.59.

Such a circumstance is perhaps indicative of the support Venezuela was able to receive from the Latin American Group, irrespective of criticisms from other caucuses in the UN, namely the Afro-Asians.

The Leoni decree issued in July 1968, warranted a full onslaught from Guyana's diplomatic machinery at the UN. As the decree took place at a time when the annual session of the General Assembly would not have been sitting, the matter was taken to the Secretary General of the UN.

"Guyana's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, Sir John Carter, was drawing to the attention of the United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, the text of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham's statement on Wednesday night in which he accused the Venezuelan Government of embarking on a course of 'international piracy' against this country."⁸⁴

In a subsequent letter to U Thant, Guyana's Permanent Representative requested certain key documents be circulated to UN member states in order to draw attention to what Guyana regarded as "...a calculated breach" of Article V(2) of the Geneva Agreement.⁸⁵ As an indication of how seriously the Guyanese government viewed the threat from Venezuela, it should be noted that in addition to this lobbying, Burnham later presented himself at the UN to Secretary General U Thant to discuss Venezuela's actions.⁸⁶

The GOG sought to lobby various groups at the UN as part of its attempt to gain support against Leoni's decree, as the *Guyana Graphic* reported:

"Guyana will be engaged in a series of activities at the United Nations later this week when it intends to solicit the support of all the regional groups of the worlds [sic] organisation in opposing Venezuela's policy of aggression against this country. Guyana's Permanent Representative at the UN, Sir John Carter, will

⁸⁴ *Guyana Graphic*, 12 July 1968, p.1.

⁸⁵ "Letter from Sir John Carter...to the United Nations...Secretary-General...requesting the circulation for the information of Member States of copies of Statement by the Prime Minister and Notes of Protest to the Government of Venezuela, 22nd July 1968" in MEA (1968b), pp.28-29.

⁸⁶ *Guyana Graphic*, 23 July 1968, p.1.

lobby the Eastern Bloc, Afro-Asian, Latin American and other regional groups as part of this country's move to expose to the world the hostile attitude of Venezuela which seeks some two-thirds of Guyana's territory."⁸⁷

The above reference to the lobbying of the Eastern Bloc is interesting since, as mentioned in chapter 1, a number of writers have described the foreign policy of the coalition government at this time as essentially pro-west in orientation and relations. Indeed in Burnham's speech on the Leoni decree to the National Assembly in Georgetown, no reference was made to lobbying the Eastern Bloc in the description of Guyana's international strategies in response to the decree. Instead, Burnham refers only to the measures taken in relation to the UN Secretary General, the Commonwealth Secretary [sic], the British High Commission, and "...discussions with the accredited representatives of other friendly governments in Georgetown...informing them of the development and inviting their support for Guyana in the face of the Venezuelan acts of aggression."⁸⁸ The Eastern bloc countries were not included since none of them had resident diplomatic missions in Georgetown at the time. This is not to say that the Eastern Bloc countries were not lobbied. The *Guyana Graphic* has reported on the Prime Minister's direct lobbying of the Eastern Bloc in the UN:

"The communiqué referred to Mr Burnham's meetings with various diplomatic missions at the UN including those from Latin America, the Eastern Bloc countries, the Soviet Union's Permanent Representative, Mr Jacob Malik, the Afro-Asian Group, Arab and Israeli nations, and Secretary General U. Thant."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ 14 July 1968, p.1. See also *Guyana Graphic*, 19 July 1968, p.1, which reports on John Carter's briefing to the 24-Member Latin American Group at the UN. This speech is also printed in MEA (1968c), pp.106-116.

⁸⁸ "Statement in National Assembly...12 July 1968", Burnham (1970), p.169.

⁸⁹ 1 August 1968, p.1.

What is clear is that in so far as the Eastern bloc was openly lobbied for support, this was done under the umbrella of trying to influence groups at the UN. The GOG's widespread lobbying at this international body was effective since such was the onslaught at the UN that the Venezuelan government contemplated its withdrawal from that organization.⁹⁰

A number of states had in fact expressed their individual support for Guyana as a result of its lobbying. The US was officially neutral on the issue. "US Ambassador Bernbaum told newsmen after a meeting with Foreign Minister Ignacio Iribarren Borges on Monday that his country's policy was one of 'complete neutrality in an issue involving two friendly nations'."⁹¹ However, subsequent US action was tantamount to support for Guyana. "In a communiqué from Prime Minister Burnham's office last evening...it was stated, 'The United States Government has taken the position that the rights of states to territorial waters to the nine-mile contiguous zone and to the continental Shelf can only attach to the coastal state...'"⁹² In other words, the US was effectively stating that Venezuela had no right to the territorial waters claimed by the Leoni decree. This line appears to be consistent with a brief dispatched by the British ambassador in Washington:

"The State Department have told us they intend to issue a statement (they hope on 25 July) to the effect that while they are neutral as to the substance of the territorial dispute between Guyana and Venezuela, they regard the recent Venezuelan Decree on territorial waters as invalid in international law."⁹³

A subsequent despatch noted, however, "The State Department have now decided not to issue a statement, since they see the Venezuelans as cooling off and do not want to

⁹⁰ *Guyana Graphic*, 17 July 1968, p.1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Guyana Graphic*, 1 August 1968, p.1.

⁹³ P. Dean, Washington, to FO, telegram no.2236, 23 July 1968, FCO 14/492.

exacerbate them."⁹⁴ The preferred course of action now being that "...the State Department will suggest to Burnham that he might state publicly on return home that he had been informed here [Washington] of the US view as described in para 1 of my telno.2236." The Guyanese leader's announcement cited earlier is a direct result of this agreed *modus operandi*. It indicates Burnham's cognisance of the fine line which the US threaded between its support for him and the need to protect its interests in Venezuela.

Another crucial element of support for the GOG, even ahead of its permanent representative briefing the Latin American Group, was that some unnamed countries within this group were urging restraint on Venezuela:

"Several Latin American countries yesterday were believed to be pressing Venezuela to drop its request of a reopening of the 1899 border arbitration with Guyana because they also have frontiers defined by similar arbitral decisions."⁹⁵

As will be seen later in this chapter, Brazil, with its many borders settled by arbitration, was to become a crucial counter-weight for the government of Guyana in its territorial controversy with Venezuela. The British position was reported in a newspaper as follows:

"Britain yesterday told Venezuela it was disturbed at a recent decree by Caracas...British sources said. The concern was expressed when the Foreign Office summoned the Venezuelan Charge D'Affaires in London, Ramon Delgado, for a meeting with top official John Reith. Britain maintains that the Venezuelan decree is contrary to the 1966 Geneva Agreement..."⁹⁶

The extent of British cautiousness in responding to the Leoni decree is, however revealed in FCO despatches:

"In the Aide Memoire handed to the Chargé d'Affaires of Venezuela in London on 16 July 1968, HMG indicated their concern at reports of the Venezuelan

⁹⁴ P. Dean, Washington, to FO, telegram no.2271, 25 July 1968, *ibid*.

⁹⁵ *Guyana Graphic*, 17 July 1968, p.1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*.

Presidential decree of 9 July 1968, and consequently wished to reserve their position on the legal aspects of the decree."⁹⁷

Britain was actually being urged by the US to condemn the illegality of the decree:

"...The State Department remain hopeful that we shall conclude that [the] Venezuelan decree is invalid in international law, and that as a major maritime power, we shall tell the Venezuelans so."⁹⁸

Despite US urging, another FCO despatch notes:

"I entirely agree with American Department that there is no point in demonstrating our public support for Mr. Burnham in a way that will provoke the Venezuelans, at a time when most indications are that the Venezuelans realise their decree was a mistake..."⁹⁹

In spite of the support given out to Guyana after its initial actions in the UN following the decree, one of Guyana's strongest protests against Venezuela at the UN was made on 3 October 1968. Such an approach appears to have been decided on at the August 1968 annual conference of Guyana's heads of mission. In the US ambassador's report on the conference based on a briefing he had received from the MEA's Permanent Secretary, Rashleigh Jackson, he states, "The Conference apparently felt that Guyana should pursue a yet more active policy in the UN..." Indicative of the significance accorded to Guyana/Venezuela Relations at this time in Guyana's foreign policy, the ambassador also notes unsurprisingly, "This topic, of course, absorbed most of the Conference time."¹⁰⁰ Drawing attention to Venezuela's actions against Guyana - Ankoko, alleged interference in Guyana's internal affairs, exclusion from the Tlatelolco Treaty and the Leoni decree - Ramphal in his speech at the 1968 session of the UN lamented:

⁹⁷ E.A.W. Bullock to Mr Hunt, 9 August 1968, FCO 14/492.

⁹⁸ P. Dean, Washington, to FO, 25 July 1968, telegram no.2271, FCO 14/492. See also despatch in same file from Dean, telegram no.2333 which refers to continued pressure from the US.

⁹⁹ E.A.W. Bullock to Mr Hunt, *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁰ Delmar Carlson, Georgetown to State Department, August 1968, Pol 32-1, *op.cit.*

"This has been the experience of Guyana's first years of Independence. It is not a heartening commentary on the emergence of an ethos of international legality and it is a depressing reflection on how readily some of the most important traditions by which countries have lived - including in this case principles of national self-determination and resistance to imperial domination - can become tarnished by power and frenzied ambition."

Moreover, relying on a technique deployed in his earlier speech to the National Assembly in Georgetown, Ramphal focused on the implications for other states if Venezuelan actions are condoned, in an attempt for states to support Guyana in view of the threats that they may face:

"...it could be the experience of any state at the hands of some powerful neighbours, once boundary settlements lose their sanctity and become forever arbitrable in response to the dictates of power. My Government invited this Assembly to consider the chaos and confusion into which most of the world's frontiers would be thrown if all one party to a boundary settlement need to do to secure that boundary's revision is to constitute itself a judge in its case; to assert that settlement is not valid; to proclaim a new boundary consonant with its own ideas and to assume the right, once it has strength and power, to extend its frontiers into the territory of a neighbouring State."¹⁰¹

In this emotionally charged speech, Ramphal also drew attention to the development implications for poorer countries like Guyana which by implication would have to divert money for development to defend its territory from outside threats:

"Every million dollars that a developing nation spends on defence, whether it be on aircraft or on ships or on a standing army, or on any of their adjuncts, represents a million dollars diverted from development...At its most conservative, however, and I use units of cost that are relevant to my country, every million dollars spent on arms would provide school places for 50,000 children, would settle 1,000 families in developing areas, would build 50 miles of secondary road into new areas of land development, would provide 10 medical clinics for the men, women and children on whom the burden of development must really fall."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ "Extracts from the address given by...S.S. Ramphal...in the General Debate of the 23rd Session of the UN General Assembly, 3rd October 1968, MEA (1968c), pp.131-140. Speech published in its entirety as "Statement by the Hon. Shridath S. Ramphal, Minister of State, General Debate, October 3, 1968, by the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the UN, NY, NY".

¹⁰² Ibid.

The GOG clearly felt confident of the support it would receive in the General Assembly for it to have continued its onslaught against Venezuela in the aforementioned speech.

Guyana's successes in the General Assembly aside, questions have been raised - not least by the Opposition PPP and specifically its leader Cheddi Jagan - as to why the Guyanese government opted to discuss the issue in the General Assembly rather than at the Security Council, especially during this period of heightened tensions with Venezuela. By the terms of the UN Charter, the latter body is the most important organ of the UN for discussing what in the GOG's own words are "...small states faced with Aggression".¹⁰³ Article 24 states:

"1. In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf."¹⁰⁴

While in Article 34 under the "Pacific Settlement of Disputes", the charter declares:

"The Security Council may investigate any dispute, any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 35 makes it clear, however, that a state may have resort to the General Assembly and not just the Security Council.¹⁰⁵

The Guyanese government was not acting out of the ordinary in choosing the General Assembly to air its grievance, but the question is why? This I will attempt to answer below. While by the terms of the Geneva Agreement, the territorial disagreement is a "controversy" rather than a dispute which has to be dealt with in the terms directed by

¹⁰³ Ramphal's 1968 speech to the UN, *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Charter of the UN, www.un.org

that Agreement, acts such as the occupation of the whole of Ankoko island and the Leoni decree could arguably be defined as acts of aggression or constituting a dispute and therefore be taken to the Security Council. It may be argued that this demand made by Ramphal before the General Assembly would have been apt before the Security Council:

"What are small nations to do faced with threats of this kind? It is Guyana today, but who knows who may be the victim of expansionist ambition tomorrow? Meet aggression with force, be ready whatever the cost, whatever the sacrifice, to defend the State against those who violate its territorial integrity. Yet, is this the answer that the collective voice of the international community is to give to the smaller States of the world at this stage of organised international effort?"¹⁰⁶

The PPP's newssheet, *Thunder*, reported that "The Government has repeatedly refused to take the question of Venezuela's aggressive actions to the UN Security Council."¹⁰⁷

Moreover, Jagan raised the issue of the government not taking Guyana's problems with Venezuela before the Security Council during the debate on the Leoni decree in the National Assembly.

"Why did we not go to the Security Council? That is what they are there for. Do we have our illustrious Mr. Braithwaite and now Mr. Carter [Guyana's former and present Ambassadors at the UN] as window-pieces there? This is the time when the matter should have been brought up immediately. But before this Government can take the matter to the Security Council it has to go through a certain set of reasoning, who will support it and who will not...It is clear from what we see now, the neutrality of the United States and the virtual toeing of the US line by Britain that these countries would not have liked the question to go to the United Nations".¹⁰⁸

A *Guyana Graphic* report shortly after Jagan's speech appears to give credence to Jagan's line of reasoning. Headlined, "Stay Away from the Security Council: US", the report states:

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ "Extracts from the address given by the Hon. S.S. Ramphal...in the General Debate of the 23rd Session of the UN General Assembly, 3rd October 1968, MEA (1968c), p.133.

¹⁰⁷ *Thunder*, vol.19, No.7, June 1968, p.7.

"The American Government is not anxious for Guyana to take its territorial controversy with Venezuela to the United Nations Security Council at this time. The Graphic was reliably informed yesterday that the reasons for the Americans' anxiety were clearly stated to the Guyana Government by the US Ambassador in Georgetown, Mr Delmar Carlson. To quote authoritative sources, 'the intricacies and ramifications' that would be involved if the border row with Venezuela went before the Security Council at this stage were impressed upon the Government. And while these 'intricacies and ramifications' are not for public disclosure, it is understood that America is anxious to avoid having to choose her side in the controversy between two 'friendly countries'."

The report also stated, "The same sources also confirmed that the US government was seeking to influence both Venezuela and Suriname against pressing their border claims on Guyana at this stage since this may add to the problems of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham's government and militate against him at the forthcoming elections.¹⁰⁹ So, if the newspaper reports are accurate it may be argued that the Guyanese government was offered US assistance in getting Venezuelan and Suriname to downplay their threats against Guyana in return for the coalition government not taking those threats to the Security Council.

Giving credence to possible US behind-the-scenes activity, Nagamootoo, writing for the PPP notes, "On arriving in NY Burnham said that his government was considering taking the border dispute before the UN Security Council in order to appeal for protection. The government would also appeal to 'friendly nations' - Canada, Britain and USA."¹¹⁰ This is corroborated in an FCO despatch which notes, "He [Burnham] is considering raising it [the Leoni decree] in the Security Council or the General

¹⁰⁸ Jagan (1968), pp.16-17.

¹⁰⁹ *Guyana Graphic*, 20 July 1968, p.1.

Assembly".¹¹¹ Nagamootoo notes that subsequently, "Guyana merely brought the question of Venezuela's aggression to the attention of the United Nations, and lodged a protest with its Secretary-General. The government did not press for a debate of the issue in the Security Council."¹¹² The inference being Burnham was steered from this body.

Cold War machinations aside, it has to be considered that any government wishing to take an issue to the Security Council for a resolution has to give a thorough analysis as to the likely outcome of the voting of that Council. Given that by Article 27 of the UN Charter, the five permanent Members have the veto, the analysis of their voting, whether it be for, against, or abstention, has to be weighted. The uncertainty involved in predicting the outcome of the Security Council would ultimately mean that a government has to think carefully before taking a matter before that body for a vote.¹¹³ As one Guyanese source has said, "If you took a course of action which led to major powers either abstaining or exercising a veto, then you have done yourself a disservice."¹¹⁴ Guyana found allies in the Afro-Asian bloc in the General Assembly, which because of the big powers' or permanent members' veto in the Security Council did not count for much in that forum. It can be argued that the General Assembly, by its relative certainty in terms of support for Guyana, would to a greater extent, have been the wiser choice for Guyana. In the final analysis, since the Ankoko issue and the Leoni decree did not amount to large-scale aggression on the part of Venezuela, risking the

¹¹⁰ Nagamootoo (1981), p.13.

¹¹¹ C.E. Diggins to Private Secretary, 15 July 1968, FCO 7/296. See also telegram no. 194, 25 July 1968: "He [Burnham] has wisely decided not to do so [go to the Security Council] at present", PREM 13/2600.

¹¹² Nagamootoo, op.cit.

ramifications of a major power veto in the Security Council would not have made calling for a resolution in that forum the most efficacious policy decision to pursue.

The English-Speaking Caribbean

At the regional level, two areas were most important in Guyana's foreign policy strategies in countering Venezuela during the coalition period - the English-speaking Caribbean and Brazil. I will discuss the English-speaking Caribbean in Guyana's foreign policy strategies against Venezuela first. As a former British colony, Guyana has historically been considered a part of what is now known as the Commonwealth Caribbean because of its cultural, trade and other ties with the English-speaking Caribbean. Even without the existence of the territorial controversy, developing relations at independence with this group of countries can be viewed as a natural progression. Ramphal, who had served on the defunct West Indies Federation which Guyana did not join and who is regarded by many as a strong advocate of Caribbean unity, summed up the importance of the English-speaking Caribbean:

"...it was perhaps inevitable that our relations with our sister countries in the Caribbean should occupy much of our time in the first year of Independence. We have on several occasions affirmed the importance which the Government of Guyana attaches to the cause of West Indian unity and we have more than pledged ourselves to the maximum degree of consultation and cooperation within the area in matters of common concern."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Article 27, chapter 3, "Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members..."

¹¹⁴ Anonymous interview.

¹¹⁵ Ramphal (1967), p.13. See Emery's thesis (1963), on reasons for Guyana's non-participation in the West Indies Federation which was formed in 1958 and dissolved in 1962.

Evidence of such consultation and cooperation in the area of foreign policy was later enshrined in the treaty establishing the Caribbean community.¹¹⁶

During the period under study, only the four largest English-speaking Caribbean countries were independent - Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Nevertheless, the GOG placed relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean as a key plank in its foreign policy and as will be seen, in its foreign policy strategies in relation to Venezuela. Manley asserts that it would be more accurate to describe the commitment to Caribbean unity "...as the prime element of Guyanese foreign policy..." in the late 1960s, "...such was the dedication of Forbes Burnham and the government he led to this goal".¹¹⁷ Luard, for instance, has asserted the significance of the Caribbean in relation to Guyana's geographical isolation as an English-speaking country in South America and its territorial problems.¹¹⁸ Glasgow has also argued that Caribbean unity was necessitated by territorial and internal racial problems.¹¹⁹

The government of Guyana's pursuit of Caribbean unity during this period has been palpably demonstrated by its instrumental role in a concrete step towards such unity - that is, in the creation of CARIFTA. This body, formed by Guyana, Barbados, Antigua and Trinidad and Tobago, came into being on 1 May 1968 when the instruments of ratification were deposited by the four countries.¹²⁰ Collins has argued that Eric Williams was one of the main proponents of a regional secretariat, but that the GOG became the most active one on Caribbean integration and hence pushed for the regional

¹¹⁶ See chapter 5.

¹¹⁷ Manley (1979), p.28.

¹¹⁸ Luard thesis (1979), p.25.

¹¹⁹ Glasgow in Davis and Wilson (1975), pp.178-197.

secretariat which was eventually located in Georgetown in 1969. He asserts further that such a stance on Caribbean unity gave Burnham the recognition of Caribbean leaders and hence legitimacy which he did not enjoy on the domestic scene.¹²¹

CARIFTA was essentially a body concerned with trade and economic issues,¹²² but as Luard asserts that body did serve as a mechanism through which Guyana could win support in the controversy with Venezuela. "The protective union of Commonwealth Caribbean regionalism created for Guyana an identity with which to counter isolation and a diplomatic counter-force or buffer zone to ward off Venezuelan aggression."¹²³ Similarly, Glasgow, who argues that Caribbean unity is "...one of the main planks of Guyana's foreign policy", cites the state's territorial problems and ethnic problems as influencing the coalition government's decision to join CARIFTA.¹²⁴ Moreover, its successor, CARICOM, offered the opportunity for co-ordination of foreign policy which did have some benefits for Guyana in terms of regional support.

Ferguson, who states that the pursuit of relations with the Caribbean "...had several dimensions", argues against criticisms from some quarters that Burnham favoured Caribbean unity, especially the pursuit of immigration from Caribbean countries, to Guyana in order to boost his electoral popularity. He counters, "The fact is, that, as eminent a West Indian as Arthur Lewis advocated at the time that Guyana's industrial

¹²⁰ MEA (1968c), pp.5-13. By 11 August 1968, all Commonwealth Caribbean countries had become members of CARIFTA, *ibid.*

¹²¹ Collins in Preiswerk (1969), pp.108-115.

¹²² Economically, at least, CARIFTA, does not appear to have provided Guyana with much success. Jagan argues, "At the end of the first two years, Jamaica increased her exports by nearly 60%, Trinidad by over 30% and Guyana by a miserly 5%." Jagan, in Marxist terms, thus concludes, "...under the imperialist plan for the Caribbean [Guyana] has been relegated to the role of an agricultural producer for an industrialized West Indies", Jagan (1979), pp.72-73.

¹²³ Luard's thesis (1979), p.40.

¹²⁴ Glasgow in Davis and Wilson (1975), p.183.

potential would be realised in line with a conscious policy that included the settlement of the hinterland to deal with the problem of under-population." He argues further that "To see [domestic political considerations] as the sole or even the main consideration devalues the historically consistent advocacy of regionalism that Burnham displayed when he was both in opposition and in power."¹²⁵

The government of Guyana's emphasis on Caribbean unity may have been due to more than a desire merely to build on ties developed during colonial times. For Burnham, at least, one element was a calculated attempt to boost his political appeal by favouring immigration from the Caribbean to Guyana as part of the pursuit of closer relations with the Caribbean:

"According to the Minister [of the Pakistani Embassy in Washington], Iftikhan Ali, he was deeply impressed with Burnham's shrewd and pragmatic approach to creating a stable anti-Jagan government in Georgetown. He said that Burnham plans to place the Hindu majority in a state of perpetual minority by a two-prong policy. First and most important of these is to open the gates to large-scale immigration from Trinidad and Jamaica which would greatly increase the Negro proportion of the population."

In effect, the emphasis on closer Caribbean relations became caught up in domestic politics. The implications, however, went further:

"Secondly, Burnham is seeking ways of driving an effective wedge between the Muslim-Pakistani and the Hindu portions of the East Indian population of British Guiana. Minister Ali said that that Muslims constitute 15 percent of the East Indian population at present and that the natural hostility between the Hindu and Muslim lends itself very well to Burnham's plan. He also indicated that one of the things Burnham discussed with him was the possibility of increasing immigration from East Pakistan which would also swell the non-Hindu portion of the population."¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Ferguson (1999), p.125.

¹²⁶ Delmar Carson, Georgetown, to Lincoln Gordon, State Department, 4 August 1966, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

The Indo-Pakistani conflict lent itself readily to the domestic scene in Georgetown and in the case of Pakistan's position presented advantages to Burnham. Further evidence that this particular aspect of Caribbean unity had links to domestic politics is summed up in the following report which also gives an indication of US support for the policy.

"...Burnham related to the President [of the USA] the idea of immigration from the over-populated British West Indian islands to Guyana and the needed electoral benefit to the Burnham administration. The President's [of the USA] subsequent inquiry to you as to whether we are on top of this idea has been interpreted as a very significant indication of the President's sympathetic attitude toward it."¹²⁷

Whatever was the descending order of motivating factors behind the emphasis on closer relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean, the pursuit of such relations as one of the foreign policy strategies to counter threats from Venezuela was of significance.

The other three independent Caribbean states of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were not in a position to provide Guyana with military assistance, but their significance lay in the verbal support which they could give to Guyana directly or via regional and international organizations. Thus, after the Leoni decree, the Jamaican Prime Minister, Hugh Shearer, was reported to have cabled the Venezuelan president Leoni urging restraint. "Mr. Shearer's message to Señor Leoni Tuesday night stated 'in the interest of hemispheric peace, I urge you to refrain from the use of force against Guyana in the present dispute'."¹²⁸ Similarly, it was reported that the Barbadian Prime Minister, Errol Barrow, cabled the Venezuelan government asking for "'an early assurance' that Venezuela would not depart from the principles of the United Nations Charter."¹²⁹ Likewise, Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister, Eric Williams, who was to

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ *Guyana Graphic*, 18 July 1968, p.1.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 19 July 1968, p.1.

play a broker role between Guyana and Venezuela at the end of the Mixed Commission in 1970, also cabled President Leoni expressing his concerns.¹³⁰ Barbados' Prime Minister, Errol Barrow, went even further by denouncing the Venezuelan claim as "politically motivated". Barrow is reported as stating, "Anyone who has studied the problem can find no grounds to support it..."¹³¹ The Barbadian government also spoke out against Venezuela in the General Assembly on Guyana's exclusion from the Treaty of Tlatelolco. "The refusal of Venezuela to countenance signature by Guyana of the Latin American Denuclearisation Treaty, is in essence, a threat to the security of the hemisphere, Deputy Premier J. Cameron Tudor of Barbados told the UN General Assembly."¹³²

Latin America

As a British colony in South America, British Guiana's links with the non-English speaking states in the region were few. The extent of the colony's remoteness is summed up by Ramphal:

"But save for...contacts with North America we lived in almost complete isolation from our neighbours in the hemisphere. A sprinkling of contacts in the Caribbean itself, perhaps notably in Aruba and Curaçao, represented our main point of reference with the non-British islands...We were a part of South America and we looked outward to the Caribbean - naturally enough - but without hardly ever a glance over our shoulders at our neighbours on the mainland."¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., 20 July 1968, p1.

¹³¹ Ibid., 13 September, 1968, p.1.

¹³² Ibid., 23 October 1968, p.1.

¹³³ Ramphal (1967), p17-18. See also Preiswerk in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1969), pp.245-271.

In recognition of such isolation from its Latin neighbours, Ramphal expressly stated shortly after independence, "Guyana has recognised in full measure the need for these new relationships, particularly with Latin American countries..."¹³⁴

Brazil has emerged as the most important state in GOG's pursuit of relations with Latin America during this period, especially in relation to Guyana's territorial problems with Venezuela. In that regard, it can be argued that the significance of Brazil to Guyana lay in its sheer economic and military might vis-à-vis Venezuela, which could be used by Guyana as a buttressing force in the absence of a defence agreement. It was Brazil, however, which made the first overtures to the GOG, as a despatch from the US Embassy in Rio de Janeiro reveals: "...GOB has taken initiative [to] promote closer friendly contact with Guyana."¹³⁵ The Desk Officer for the Americas in the Brazilian foreign ministry, Itamaraty, had delivered "an official invitation" to the GDF's chief, colonel Pope inviting him to the Eighth Annual Conference of American Army Commanders which was scheduled for September 1968. As the despatch notes, however, "Mindful that Guyana may be reluctant to make [a] military meeting [the] first official contact between countries, GOB also suggested that [the] Guyana delegation be diversified so that wider ranging talks and contacts in Rio could be possible."¹³⁶

The courting of relations by Brazil to Guyana can perhaps be understood in the context of what has been labelled its "sub-imperialist role" in the 1960s. As Kirton elaborates:

"There has been the view that in the 1960s, Brazil gained a level of regional economic and political power that could be characterised as similar in some

¹³⁴ Ramphal, op.cit., p18.

¹³⁵ Telegram from Belton, to State Department, 14 May 1968, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

respects and with some limitations, to the hemispheric economic predominance of the United States. In fact, Brazilian sociologist Ruy Maino Marini, writing in 1965, argued that Brazil had taken on a sub-imperialist role in the region, and as he noted, had expressed the intention of becoming the centre from which imperialist expansion in Latin America would radiate."¹³⁷

In focusing on the period 1968-1978, Kirton concludes, "Undoubtedly, relations between the two countries in that period reflected the sub-imperialist role which Brazil had summed up during that period."¹³⁸

The GOG was keen to act on the positive signals emanating from Itamaraty. Another US despatch, this time from its embassy in Georgetown, reveals that the August 1968 conference of Guyana's heads of mission "...agreed on the need to intensify relations with Hemispheric countries, particularly Brazil..." That in effect meant the GOG opening a resident diplomatic mission in Rio de Janeiro, irrespective of logistical problems. "It was...decided that relations should be opened as promptly as possible with Brazil...even though the staffing of another Embassy would present difficult problems of personnel and financing..."¹³⁹ The decision to go ahead with the establishment of an embassy in Rio was made against the background of an awareness of the adverse effects that Brazil's close links with Portugal might have on Guyana's cultivation elsewhere of Afro-Asian relations:

"With respect specifically to relations with Brazil, the Conference discussed at some length the problems which such relations might raise in terms of Guyana's relations with the Afro-Asians, in view particularly of the 'close-axis' existing between Brazil and Portugal and the adverse reflections of Brazil's pro-Portuguese position in Afro-Asian councils. Nonetheless, the Conference decided that Brazil was too close a neighbor and too important a power to be further ignored..."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Kirton in Jeffrey and Menke (1991), pp.214-215.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.216.

¹³⁹ Delmar Carson, Georgetown to State Department, 13 August 1968, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

In a case of realpolitik, the coalition government no doubt placed the value of Brazil, especially regarding the territorial controversy with Venezuela, above a possible upset of the Afro-Asian bloc.

The GOG's decision at its annual heads of mission conference has to be understood especially against the background of the Brazilian government's communiqué released a month before the conference, which as one British diplomat concluded, "...amounts to a formal declaration of support for the Guyana position" in the territorial controversy with Venezuela.¹⁴¹ It is interesting to observe that in the annual report from Venezuela's mission in Caracas, a recognition of lack of support for the Venezuelan claim was registered:

"Desde el momento mismo que el suscrito tomó posesión de la Jefatura de la Misión Diplomática en Georgetown, hizo del conocimiento de ese Despacho las aprehensiones que tenía sobre la política que el limítrofe país sureño seguiría ante la reclamación Venezolana y las posibles acometidas del Gobierno Nacional en Guyana. El desarrollo ulterior de los acontecimientos ha confirmado mi inicial sospecha de que Brasil se opondría a la reclamación y trataría de boicotear las iniciativas de Venezuela en este país, especialmente aquellas realizadas a través de esta Representación diplomática."¹⁴²

The annual report of the Venezuelan foreign ministry, Libro Amarillo 1968, was even stronger in its appraisal of the Brazilian position on Venezuela's claim to Essequibo. "La Misión ha ido adelantando al Despacho, por razones históricas y geopolítico-económicas, es el principal enemigo de Venezuela en sus tareas de recuperación del territorio Essequibo."¹⁴³ The opening of the Brazilian embassy in Georgetown was interpreted as part of that country's strategy against the Venezuelan claim:

¹⁴¹ Christian Adams, Rio de Janeiro to M.W. Atkinson, FCO, 2 August 1968, FCO 7/298.

¹⁴² País Guyana Expediente no.D.G. 2.317-16, Informe Annual 1968.

¹⁴³ MRE (1968), p.39.

"Se bien ayer se encontraba ausente del teatro de operaciones hoy, al instalar una Misión diplomática en Georgetown le será más fácil obstaculizar nuestras acciones y trabajar por el logro de los objectios señalados por Itamaratí y la Escuela superior de Guerra."¹⁴⁴

The communiqué emanating from Itamaraty on 27 July 1968 in the wake of the Leoni decree earlier the same month states, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been watching with due concern, and the attention which the subject demands, the deterioration in the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela." In an unambiguous reference to its support for Guyana regarding Venezuela's contention against the 1899 Award the communiqué stated, "...the Brazilian Government at this stage wish to re-affirm their traditional position with respect to the inviolability of treaties and the faithful execution of international agreements."¹⁴⁵ Although a subsequent note in British files states, "The Brazilians do not wish to be involved militarily",¹⁴⁶ the communiqué from Itamaraty sent a clear signal as to Brazil's position. Similarly, when Guyana's representative drew the attention of the Latin American Group at the UN to the Leoni decree and other Venezuelan action, Brazil (along with the other important source of support for Guyana - the Commonwealth) supported Guyana. "Deputy Secretary-General has since told me that [the] Brazilian representative spoke up strongly on Guyana's behalf, as did Commonwealth: other Latin Americans were silent, presumably being without instructions."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ "Translation of a statement issued by Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 27th July 1968", FO 7/298.

¹⁴⁶ Handwritten note re: Despatch of 5 September to Wallace and Mr Diggines, FO 7/298.

¹⁴⁷ J.E. Russell, Rio, telegram no.356, 19 July 1968 to FO, FCO 7/298.

The coalition government's decision to send representatives on a four-day visit to Brazil from 26-30 August 1968, was clearly intended to capitalise on the friendship emanating from Brazil and the window of opportunity which that friendship presented in its territorial problems with Venezuela.¹⁴⁸ A British embassy despatch concluded that the visit "...may not have produced any immediate and concrete political decisions, but it has certainly started an effective dialogue between Brazil and Guyana: and there are likely to be useful results in economic and technical cooperation."¹⁴⁹ Above all, the message being sent out to Venezuela as a result of the visit and Brazilian action, would have been of intrinsic value to Guyana. Brazil has, therefore, emerged as the most important Latin American state in Guyana's foreign policy strategies to win that region's support in the territorial problems with Venezuela.

The International Approaches in a Cold War Context

The preceding sections of this chapter point to the very activist foreign policy strategies of the coalition government as it sought to win support for its position in the territorial controversy with Venezuela. It can be argued that in so far as Guyana maintained its territorial integrity that the strategies deployed were successful. The government had clearly identified and acted to cultivate the support of those countries or groupings, such as the Afro-Asian lobby in the UN from which it would receive sympathetic understanding.

While the government of Guyana's internationalising of the conflict had won the country support and resulted in criticism of Venezuela in a number of cases, the

¹⁴⁸ MEA (1968c), p.73.

declassified records of the British FCO not only corroborate some newspaper reports and PPP allegations at the time about Cold War machinations behind the scenes in support of Burnham, but also reveal new insights into such manoeuvres. Opposition leader, Cheddi Jagan's allegation that the Leoni decree was part of the US-British-PNC conspiracy to keep him out of power was discussed earlier in this chapter. Likewise one newspaper at the time made the following report:

"The sources said Washington was evidently interested in avoiding problems to Guyanese Prime Minister Forbes Burnham who will once more be called to test his popularity in forthcoming general elections. The Dutch, the Surinam and the Venezuelan Governments were asked to 'ease demands against the Guyanese Government at least for some time', the sources said. As far as Washington was concerned, there were only two tactical approaches to the internal Guyanese problem in order to facilitate Burnham's second consecutive victory. The first was that countries with border claims against Guyana - Venezuela and Surinam create as few problems as possible to the Burnham administration. The second was for Venezuela to continue its pressure, making sure the Guyanese realised the danger they would incur if leftist Cheddi Jagan triumphed in the elections. Of the two approaches Washington was strongly in favour of the first while it condemned an in-between measure, the source said."¹⁵⁰

Subsequently, although the same report quoted US ambassador Bernbaum declaring "...that his country's policy was one of 'complete neutrality in an issue involving two friendly nations'",¹⁵¹ a later article declared the implicit support of the US government for Guyana. The *Guyana Graphic* reported:

"In a communiqué from Prime Minister Burnham's office last evening, following an almost day long conference with some of his top aides, it was stated: 'The United States Government has taken the position that the rights of states to territorial waters, to the nine-mile contiguous zone and to the continental shelf can only attach to the coastal state...'"

¹⁴⁹ John Kennedy, Rio to Michael Stewart, FO, 5 September 1968 FCO 7/298.

¹⁵⁰ *Guyana Graphic*, 17 July 1968, p.1.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The report further stated that "Washington has been deeply involved in behind-the-scenes moves to get both Venezuela and Guyana to de-escalate the controversy before it came to the boil and provoked a serious crisis. Notes have been sent by the US State Department to both the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry and Guyana Ministry of External Affairs."¹⁵²

Given the known US support for Guyana and its determination to keep Jagan out of power, that Washington may have exerted influence on Guyana's neighbours to ease the tensions during the Guyanese elections, is plausible. The cautious response of the British government to the Leoni decree was referred to earlier. Such caution reflected three British concerns, as this FCO despatch reveals: "...we have to be careful not to act as if we were still the colonial power." Additionally, as the despatch further notes:

"In Venezuela we have investments valued at about £500 million, exports in 1967 of £21.6 million (including oil purchases) made necessary by the closure of the Suez-Canal). Moreover, we have no effective means of bringing direct pressure on the Venezuelans."¹⁵³

Against such a background, the guidance telegram concludes:

"It follows from this that while we generally sympathise with Guyana over Venezuela's recent actions, our own role must in practice be limited to providing advice and moral support to Guyana, to representations to Venezuela to reduce tension and to action to persuade the United States and Latin American Governments to talk similarly to Venezuela..."¹⁵⁴

Such British strategies were put into action, as the following despatches indicate:

"It has been suggested that certain quarters in Venezuela consider that a victory by Dr. Jagan in the elections later this year would further the Venezuelan cause since they assume that, in that event, the Americans would not oppose military intervention by the Venezuelans. This is dangerous thinking and the Foreign Secretary took the opportunity of his talks with Dr. Iribarren [2 July 1968 in London] to draw attention to the undesirability of any course of action which might further the coming to power of a "Castroist" government in Guyana.

¹⁵² *Guyana Graphic*, 1 August 1968, p.1.

¹⁵³ Guidance telegram no. 194, 25 July 1968, PREM 13/2699.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Clearly, any visible support Government can get from third parties will help in these circumstances and we therefore think it important that we should do what we can to encourage the Brazilians in their intention to establish closer relations with Guyana...I think the main point to be made is that we regard it as essential, not only for our interests in Guyana, but also for the stability of the area as a whole, that the Burnham Government should succeed at the forthcoming elections. It is therefore important in our view that the disputes with Venezuela and Surinam should not take a turn which could weaken Mr Burnham's position."¹⁵⁵

Moreover, British thinking was reflective of Anglo-American diplomacy in action as this other FCO despatch on the need for British action notes:

"The United States, the Canadians and the Brazilians have all made known their disapproval of the Venezuelan decree and we cannot do less, not only from the point of view of Anglo-Guyanese relations, but also in support of the agreed Anglo/American policy to do all that we properly can to help the present coalition government in Guyana win the coming elections."¹⁵⁶

The need to keep Jagan out of power therefore led not only to the US exerting its influence on Guyana's neighbours, but also to action by Washington's key ally.

A British diplomat was also keen to impress upon Venezuela the British thinking regarding Burnham remaining in power:

"I suggested to the Ambassador [Venezuelan in Rio, Elbano Provenzali] that irredentist pressure by Venezuela on Guyana now might produce the most undesirable political reactions there: it was surely in our interest that Burnham should remain in power: a Jagan government could hardly be to the best interest of Venezuela or Latin America in general. I do not know if this is really a good line: but he did not contest it."¹⁵⁷

The extent that the Brazilian government also concurred with HMG's government's line of reasoning regarding the Brazilian position in relation to Venezuelan action is revealed:

"I believe that the Brazilian government shared my concern that the situation should not further deteriorate, particularly in view of the forthcoming elections in

¹⁵⁵ C.E. Diggines, Rio, to FCO, July 1968, FCO 7/298.

¹⁵⁶ E.A.W. Bullock to Mr Hunt, 9 August 1968, FCO 14/1492.

¹⁵⁷ John Russell, Rio to C.E. Diggines, American Department, Foreign Office, 19 July 1968, FCO 7/298.

Guyana. The Brazilian government were particularly concerned at the recent Venezuelan Presidential Decree which they did not regard as helpful."¹⁵⁸

Brazil's concurrence with Britain and US concerns can be understood against the background of Brazil's concerns about political developments in British Guiana since the 1950s. As Kirton notes:

"By 1953, General Carlos de Meira Mattos writing [in] the *Correio Paulista* argued that the greatest problem facing Brazil in its links with the Guianas was 'the danger which leftist leader Cheddi Jagan could present in the region.' By 1964, the Brazilian government had welcomed the coalition government of the People's National Congress...under Forbes Burnham and the United Force...with its leader Peter D'Aguiar which had assumed power with United States support."¹⁵⁹

In so far as Venezuela toned down its confrontational action against Guyana after the Leoni decree and for the remainder of 1968, this has to be understood in the context of both the government of Guyana's foreign policy strategies and the Cold War-inspired understanding of the US, Britain, Brazil and eventually Venezuela, in not doing anything to effect a victory for Jagan at the December 1968 polls. It should be noted that while such coordination to ease Burnham's path to victory was important, Burnham himself - perhaps in awareness of western support for him in a cold war context - devised his own mechanisms to effect a victory in the 1968 elections. In this regard, the introduction of overseas and proxy voting which facilitated fraudulent voters' lists was a crucial element behind Burnham's victory.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ FCO to Rio de Janeiro, telegram 530, 16 July 1968, FCO 7/296

¹⁵⁹ Kirton in Jeffrey and Menke (1991), p.216.

Summary

This chapter has traced the evolution of the international approaches of the government of Guyana to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy in the immediate post-colonial period in Guyana. I have argued that the decision to pursue such strategies was necessitated by Guyana's economically and military weak position vis-à-vis Venezuela. The government was able to enhance its influence through utilization of international fora such as the UN and strategically important groupings and countries. In this regard, the government demonstrated recognition of the *realpolitik* within which its geographical location in the western hemisphere, US interests in Venezuela and the US determination to keep Jagan out of power, had placed it. Hence, the GOG's lobbying did not involve the Eastern Bloc countries on a bilateral basis. The territorial controversy is to be understood in a cold war context and Guyanese domestic politics, both of which are intertwined and served to the advantage of Burnham. Even with these factors, the extent to which a small state can exert its international influence on the international stage through use of appropriate channels has been demonstrated.

¹⁶⁰ See chapter 1.

Chapter 4:
**The Burnham Years 1969-1980: from Cooperation to Major
Tension**

Burnham's PNC party assumed power after the December 1968 elections as a government in its own right for the first time. He was to remain in power until his death in August 1985. The Burnham years of the territorial controversy will be examined across two chapters. The present chapter is divided into two sections to facilitate our analysis of this lengthy term of office, which witnessed variations in the relationship between Guyana and Venezuela. Part one, which covers the first year of the Burnham-led government, examines Guyana's relations with Venezuela and its international approaches which amounted to a continuation of the strategies employed by the coalition government. In part two, the focus is on the Protocol of Port-of-Spain which effected a change in the trajectory of relations for much of the 12-year life of this agreement. Parts one of this chapter and the next chapter, is illustrative of my argument that the use of foreign policy as a defence mechanism comes in response to threats, real or perceived from Venezuela. At the same time, it is clear that between 1969 and 1992 the GOG operated under a siege mentality which meant it was distrustful of Caracas' intentions. Hence, as will be evident in parts two of this chapter and chapter 5, the government sought to maintain awareness in international fora about its position on the Guyana-Venezuela controversy, albeit on a lower and more subtle key, at times of good relations between the two states.

Part I: The First Eighteen Months of the PNC Government

Guyana-Venezuela Relations

The cycle of conflict in the relations between Guyana and Venezuela which characterised the first two years of independence, continued for a third year. This time,

the international approaches of the Guyanese government were conducted by the PNC administration which dropped its coalition partner just prior to the elections at the end of 1968. Tensions between the two states started on 2 January 1969, when a group of cattle ranchers launched an armed attack on the police station in the principal government administrative town of Lethem in the Rupununi district which lies within Essequibo. The Guyanese government implicated its Venezuelan counterpart in this action. The attack - by the European descended Hart and Melville families, along with their Amerindian workers, marked the start of the group's attempt to secede from Guyana.¹ Despite the town's remote location from Georgetown, reports about the secessionists cutting off radio communications with the capital and blocking airstrips in the area (thereby removing the quickest means of access from Georgetown) reached the capital. In response, armed forces soon gained access to the town and regained control.²

On the surface, this was a rebellion from a remote hinterland location against the psychologically distant government in Georgetown. That is, until the statement of one of the captured secessionists reportedly revealed the Venezuelan government's complicity in the plot to establish a separate state.³ His account also provided details of the military training and weapons received from the Venezuelan army which had flown them to and from their training camp in Venezuela.⁴ The GOG wasted little time in blaming the Venezuelan government for the rebellion. According to Burnham's radio broadcast:

¹ "Text of 'Radio broadcast to the nation on disturbances in the Rupununi savannahs'", 4 January 1969, Burnham (1970), pp.171-176. See also MEA (1969), pp.39-41. The British-descended Harts and Melvilles are said by Burnham to have resented decolonization from Britain and hence his government, Burnham (1970), p.175.

² Ibid., pp.171-176.

³ Ibid., pp.173-174.

⁴ Ibid.

"...within a few hours of the attack on Lethem, the Venezuelan press and radio were reporting an Amerindian uprising in the Rupununi and suggesting that it arose out of the wish of these Guyanese citizens to come under the sovereignty of Venezuela...In addition, Valerie Hart, the wife of one of the Hart brothers, and a candidate of the United Force, at the recent election, was taken to Venezuela by the aircraft that brought the armed gang. In Venezuela, Valerie Hart has been provided with facilities for broadcasting appeals for assistance in support of what she describes as an uprising of the indigenous population. These appeals are beamed to the United States but call for assistance from all possible sources."⁵

Burnham then charged that the rebellion was part of a pattern of Venezuelan interference in Guyana's domestic affairs.⁶

The government in Caracas denied that it was involved in the uprising, but saw it as their duty to give refugee status to people coming from an area it regards as part of Venezuela. As President Raúl Leoni stated in his last major speech:

"The Venezuelan Government have not played the smallest part in such events [the Rupununi rebellion] but they have considered it their obligation to protect with Venezuelan nationality those of the persecuted who took refuge here, as being natives of that vast portion of our territory of which we were at the end of the last century, swindled by a venal award, coloured by the imperialist voracity then in vogue. To these Venezuelan refugees we are not only offering moral support, but we are promising land, credit, housing and tools to work with, because they are industrious people who do not want to be a burden on a fatherland which has opened to them its fraternal arms."⁷

While not admitting complicity, the Venezuelan president conceded that his government was taking care of the rebels' welfare afterwards. As Rout notes, however, "Caracas officialdom heatedly denied complicity in the affair, but they convinced few beyond their national boundaries."⁸ Following the rebellion, the Burnham government was cognizant

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p.174. The Guyanese ambassador to Venezuela was also reported as telling Reuters that "...his government was absolutely certain Venezuela was involved in the four-day uprising.", *Express*, 8 January 1969, p.13.

⁷ British Embassy, Caracas to FCO, 14 March 1969, FCO7/1325/1.

⁸ Rout (1971), p.66.

of the need to develop the remote Rupununi region, including the granting of land titles to Amerindians.⁹

The differences between Guyana and Venezuela in the interpretation of the sanctity of treaties - a factor which is at the heart of the controversy over the 1899 award - manifested itself as an area of difficulty between the two states during the UN Conference on the Law of Treaties. This occurred at the first session of that conference in April 1968 when Venezuela attempted to modify article 42 of the draft agreement which placed limits on states' powers to invalidate or terminate treaties.¹⁰ Further attempts were made by Caracas to modify the said article at the next conference in May 1969. Guyana claimed success in ensuring that article 42 was adopted without amendment.

The inauguration on 11 March 1969 of the new Venezuelan president, Rafael Caldera of the COPEI party, who replaced the AD's Raúl Leoni, did not immediately alter Guyana's relations with Venezuela. In June 1969, for instance, the *Guyana Graphic's* headline read, "Reid [Guyana's acting prime minister] hints trouble brewing on border" following reported incidents of shooting. Meanwhile, the GDF and armed policemen were deployed to guard key installations in the Guyanese capital including the radio stations, conveying a heightened sense of alert about possible Venezuelan action.¹¹ The following day, a newspaper noted, "Tension eased on the Guyana-Venezuela border yesterday, but sources close to Government said that the nation's security forces will

⁹ See Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.191-199, on the Burnham government's plans for the development of this region.

¹⁰ MEA (1969), pp.37-38.

¹¹ *Guyana Graphic*, 7 June, 1969, p.1.

remain on the alert."¹² In August 1969, the tables were turned around with Venezuela accusing Guyana of aggression. "Venezuela tonight accused neighbouring Guyana of adopting a warlike and provocative attitude by building up its forces on the two nations' common border under the guise of countering an alleged Venezuelan invasion of disputed territory." The report based on Venezuelan foreign minister, Aristides Calvani's press conference continued, "Calvani also...charged that Guyanese Prime Minister Burnham was setting up a 'racial government in the very heart of Latin America where we always maintained the principle of racial integration'."¹³ In effect, both sides were trying to win the propaganda war.

Details of a protest about Venezuelan troop movements along the border are recorded in a despatch from the US embassy in Georgetown to the US Department of State. The telegram notes that although the US was informed by its Guyanese counterpart, this latest incident was still not public knowledge in Georgetown.¹⁴ The GOG also reported incidents taking place on 21 February 1970, just prior to Guyana's republic celebrations on 23 February 1970.¹⁵ In the by now established pattern of exchanges between Caracas and Georgetown, Caldera stated that Venezuelan troops did not fire the first shots, blaming instead Guyana's troops.¹⁶

A former colonel of the GDF, David Granger, has suggested that Venezuela may have been using military threats to force Guyana to the bargaining table:

¹² Ibid., 8 June, 1969, p.1.

¹³ *Trinidad Guardian*, 21 August 1969, p.1. See also *Guyana Graphic*, 23 August 1969, p.1.

¹⁴ Telegram 064, 21 January 1970, Pol 32-1, Guyana-Venezuela, RG59. See also earlier telegram 048, op.cit.

¹⁵ Skerret (1982), p.22; and MEA (1970b), pp.84-85. See also telegram no.119, Elwood, Port-of-Spain to State Department and telegram 094, Herron, Caracas, to the State Department, 26 February 1970, both in Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁶ Telegram 969 from Herron, Caracas, to State Department, 27 February 1970, Pol 32, op.cit.

"...Venezuela was prepared to use military power to bring about a favourable solution to the controversy. I think they were prepared to use aircraft or harassment or even ground forces to drive Guyana to the bargain table and I think they are still prepared to do so".¹⁷

This argument is plausible when viewed against the background of this period during which the Mixed Commission was in a state of deadlock. A comment in a telegram from a US diplomat in Caracas, regarding the shooting incidents around Guyana's republic celebrations suggests that the Venezuelan government may not have sanctioned the military action. "On Venezuelan side, we have continuing concern [about] whether senior civilian authorities [are] able [to] maintain control [over] their military forces."¹⁸ This implies that the Venezuelan military, at least, may have had a separate agenda from the Caldera government.

Despite the tensions between the two states, the meetings between Guyana and Venezuela within the framework of the Mixed Commission continued after Burnham's PNC had emerged as the sole party in the Guyanese government. A total of seventeen sessions had taken place up to 17th February 1970 when the Mixed Commission expired according to the four-year terms set out in the Geneva Agreement under which its mandate was established.¹⁹ Both sides failed to reach a solution on the territorial controversy.

A former Venezuelan diplomat and writer on Guyana's foreign policy, Sadio Garavini di Turno, has argued that the concept of the Mixed Commission was doomed from the start since it put the two contesting countries in the positions of both judge and

¹⁷ Interview with David Granger, 9 December 1999.

¹⁸ Caracas to State Department, 26 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁹ The last meeting of the Mixed Commission was held in Kingston, Jamaica from 13-16 February 1970. See MEA (1970b), pp.85-86.

jurors in their own cases. He contends that the difficulty also laid in the two sides trying to find a political solution to a juridical problem, hence both Guyana and Venezuela had their own interpretations as to the purpose of the Mixed Commission. As Garavini di Turno notes:

"Una Comisión Mixta, integrada solo por las partes, es una institución claramente política y difícilmente podría esperarse de ella un dictamen jurídico. Si su mandata fuera jurídico, las partes se encontrarían en la insostenible posición de ser juez y parte."²⁰

Given the noted reluctance of either side to refer the controversy to the ICJ, it was unlikely at the time that Guyana or Venezuela would have submitted to a process in which they were mere observers. Garavini's argument is evident in the record of one of the Mixed Commission's meetings. It will be recalled that the Mixed Commission had faced deadlock over Guyana and Venezuela's disparate interpretations of Article I of the Geneva Agreement. The following extract of the report of the thirteenth meeting of the Mixed Commission, which was held in Antigua in June 1969, gives an insight into the kind of impasse faced:

"On the question of Venezuela's demand for priority of development to be given to the Essequibo region there was much closed discussion involving a retracing of previous arguments. Venezuela in justification of the demand referred to the political character of her claim. Guyana, however, reminded Venezuela of the fact that the parties in the Commission had reached a position of deadlock on the jurisdictional question of the competence of the Commission to consider a rearrangement of the existing boundary unless the Venezuelans first made good their assertion that the arbitral award under which Guyana now holds the territory was a nullity. Venezuela had refused to make good that contention and Guyana had in turn refused to consider any further issues unless that contention had first been disposed of. It was against this background and on the specific undertaking that the basic position of each party on this jurisdictional question would not be prejudiced that the parties had agreed to pass on to a consideration of proposals for economic cooperation. The political aspect of Venezuela's claim was only

²⁰ Garavini di Turno, Sadio (1999), mimeo., copy of an article published in a Caracas newspaper in March 1999. Also interview with Garavini di Turno, 28 February 2000.

another reflection of her contention on the jurisdictional issue and was accordingly inadmissible as a factor to be considered on the question of economic cooperation."²¹

In essence, both sides pursued separate agendas. The Venezuela president, Rafael Caldera, was later reported in a press conference as stating:

"This Commission, because of Guyana, has not achieved the objectives of the agreement. The specific aim of the agreement was to find a satisfactory formula for a practical solution of the matter, and the Guyanese delegates for four years have refused to discuss all Venezuelan initiatives, raising instead the juridical question of the validity or invalidity of the arbitral award."²²

With each side having its own interpretation of the Geneva Agreement and blaming the other for stalling the work of the Mixed Commission, it was ultimately doomed to failure.

Although the Mixed Commission did not succeed in bringing about a solution to the territorial controversy, it offered the advantage of engaging both sides in dialogue. This factor was noted in a newspaper report: "...observers believe the value of the commission's meeting is in perpetuating a dialogue between the two countries."²³

Further, it was observed:

"It [the Mixed Commission] has prevented tempers from flaring so high as to precipitate an attack on Guyana from the western and stronger neighbour. But while the commission served as a forum that did nothing but talk, the talking did serve as a cushion to absorb the shocks from outside its own confines and even within."²⁴

Dialogue as an important element in the relations between states was therefore maintained. The talks held and their outcome will be discussed in part 2 of this chapter.

²¹ Report signed by Donald Jackson and Mohamed Shahabuddeen, Guyanese members of the Mixed Commission, 10 June 1969. This report, which still remains classified in Guyana, was attached to a despatch of 13 June 1969 from K.G. Ritchie, Georgetown to E.A.W. Bullock, FCO, who stated that he obtained it "on a strictly private basis", FCO 7/1325/1.

²² Report on Caldera's press conference in telegram 203 from Herron, Caracas, to State Department, 16 January 1970, Pol 21-1 Guyana-Venezuela, RG59

²³ *Guyana Graphic*, 13 April 1969, p.1.

²⁴ *Sunday Chronicle*, 13 July 1969.

The International Approaches of the Government of Guyana

The foreign policy strategies employed at the international level during the PNC's first eighteen months in government represented a continuation of the strategies developed during the earlier PNC-UF coalition government. That is, a utilization of selected international institutions and selected regional states and/or groupings. In the words of one of Guyana's ministers whose portfolio included foreign affairs, those diplomatic initiatives represented, "...the art and technology of national self-defence through international action."²⁵ Hence as one newspaper noted:

"From the corridors of the United Nations building in New York to Paris, the Fletcher's Law School in America to Jamaica, wherever Guyana's representatives, and in particular, Mr. Ramphal, appeared the opportunity was seized to influence understanding and support for Guyana's case against Venezuela's spurious claim."²⁶

Such a statement was made in 1969 at a time of heightened tensions with Venezuela.

The strategic timing of the annual heads of mission conference which continued to be held during the Burnham years gives an indication of the significance of the UN in Guyana's foreign policy, as this extract indicates: "The Conference is usually held in August, a timing which enables the Conference to work out Guyana's position on the main issues likely to come before the new session of the General Assembly which opens in September."²⁷ At the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly in 1969, Guyana's then minister of state drew the attention of the international community not only to what in his government's opinion were the most recent acts committed by

²⁵ "Statement by the Honourable S.S. Ramphal, Attorney General and Minister of State during the debate on the Protocol of Port-of-Spain in the National Assembly, on 22nd June, 1970", MEA (1970a), p.11.

²⁶ *Sunday Graphic*, 14 December 1969, p.14.

²⁷ MEA (1969), p.69.

Venezuela against Guyana, but as a direct concomitant called on that body to ensure the security of small states. Starting with the latter, Ramphal opined:

"Especially in the area of international security, Guyana considers that there is a pressing need for the middle and smaller states to assert a positive role and, resisting the pressures towards bi-polarisation, to bring to bear on the problems of international security that influence which their solidarity in support of the Charter can produce. As one of the non-aligned countries of the world, we stand ready to play our part, however small and modest it may be in all such collective efforts designed to ensure peace in the world and more especially the security of those who least have the capacity to breach that peace - the small developing nations."²⁸

The GOG was likely to be a beneficiary if such a programme was implemented, hence its calculated gesture of offering to be a contributor to the scheme. In the same speech, Ramphal also called on the UN to fulfil its charter obligations for peacekeeping, especially in developing countries. It becomes clear that this is an area which the Burnham government no doubt calculated it may be in need of one day. As Ramphal states:

"It [international peacekeeping machinery] would also of necessity help to avoid the current diversion of energies and resources within small States from the urgent tasks of development to the essential requirements of defence - a diversion which small States have no option but to make when faced with hostility from across their borders and the absence of effective international machinery that will deter or restrain the intruder."²⁹

The defence or development dichotomy choice invoked in Ramphal's speech to the same body the previous year was once again being used, this time in a call on the UN to have a peacekeeping machinery for small states. In linking his call for the security of small

²⁸ "Address by the Hon. S.S. Ramphal...Chairman of the Guyana Delegation given in the General Debate of the 24th Session of the General Assembly October 6, 1969", reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 91-104. The same speech was also published as in Ramphal (1969).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

states to their self-determination, the underlying concern with the territorial controversy is evident:

"Having thus affirmed the right of men to govern themselves, the right of new nations to exist, this Organisation must provide just and effective means to protect those rights and to secure those States; for it would be to argue a curious logic that having given life to the small States under conditions in no way related to the material power they might later exercise in world affairs but which had everything to do with rights of their peoples as men, Member States of this Organisation should remain unmoved as these new nations fall prey to the expansionist ambitions of older or far more powerful neighbours and the aspirations of their peoples are crushed."³⁰

Further, he is unambiguous in the motivation for the particular line of advocacy:

"The threatened State has no option. My own country's experience has led us to this advocacy; but it could, and would, be the experience of many another small - and not so small - State if there continues to be no effective machinery for international security and if the practice were once established that treaties, however solemnly concluded and however consistently acknowledged and respected, may be repudiated unilaterally at the whim of the more powerful signatory."³¹

The impact of the technique of broadening the context of the problems resulting from the territorial controversy with Venezuela in order to elicit international support was evidently not lost on the Guyanese government.

Ramphal also drew the attention of the General Assembly to the Rupununi Rebellion in which the Venezuelan government's complicity was asserted, and also to attempts by Caracas to stymie the development of Guyana. On the latter, the contextual application was widened to appeal to Latin American states, in particular. He stated:

"...it is aggression of the type that the Latin American region of which we are a part itself recently proscribed when in the Consensus of Vina del Mar it stipulated respect for the principle that 'no State may apply or encourage economic and political coercion to compel another State to grant it advantages of any kind; on

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

the contrary, every effort must be made to avoid policies, actions, and measures which may endanger the economic and social development of another State."³²

Responding to the address of the Venezuelan permanent representative to the UN, the Guyanese equivalent not only refuted Venezuelan's arguments, but in what can only be described as diplomatic PR, demonstrated the racial diversity of Guyana's delegation:

"Today we have with us in our delegation to this Session of the Assembly the Parliamentary Secretary for Amerindian Affairs, himself a Guyanese of Amerindian origin - a member of our Parliament and our Government with special responsibilities for the welfare of the indigenous people of Guyana."³³

Such a presentation was important against Venezuela's charging of the Burnham-led government being racist, and specifically, of the Rupununi rebellion being one that included ostracised Amerindians against the government in Georgetown.³⁴

In an appeal to Latin American governments, Guyana's permanent representative called for the adoption of similar principles to that of the Organization of African Unity under which the boundaries inherited from colonial times are regarded as settled:

"Let us in South America learn from the example of Africa, the wisdom of not reopening the boundaries of a continent which were the product of another era and the work of forces external to it for which our generation bears no responsibility."³⁵

This is a message that would have had resonance among the African members at the UN; yet another significant factor in the GOG's battle to win international support.

While the General Assembly continued to be the main forum at the UN in which Guyana drew the attention of the international community to the controversy, the

³² Ibid.

³³ "Statement by...Mr P.A. Thompson, the Permanent Representative of Guyana in response to Venezuela's reply to Guyana's statement in the General Debate, October 8, 1969", MFA (1969), p.107.

³⁴ The address of the Venezuelan permanent representative, Andrés Aguilar to the General Assembly is reprinted as document no.19 in MRE (1998), pp.349-350.

³⁵ "Statement by...Mr P.A. Thompson...", op.cit., p.110.

Burnham government also informed the Security Council of certain acts committed against it by Venezuela. For instance, this part of the UN was notified of armed attacks on the Guyana border outpost at Eterinbang during the country's independence celebrations.³⁶ The GOG also notified all governments with which it had links of the incidents.³⁷ Given the fact that Guyana had begun the expansion of its diplomatic relations around this time, such notification would have reached a larger and more diverse range of countries than during the coalition years.³⁸

Fortuitously for the Burnham government, the first CHOGM after his administration took office was held from 7-15 January 1969. This was also less than a week after the Rupununi rebellion, thereby presenting the GOG with an almost immediate international forum at which to draw attention to what was in its opinion an act against the state of Guyana committed with the support of Venezuela. Unlike future Commonwealth summits, we are given a deeper insight into the issues raised by the Burnham government, than what is contained in the official communiqués.

Attention was drawn to Venezuelan involvement in "...the provision of training and sophisticated military equipment" to subversives in Guyana, clearly a reference to the Rupununi rebellion. Moreover, Burnham used the Summit to chide the international community for its seeming selectivity in responding to charges of aggression:

"All Guyana got in support against this aggression, the Prime Minister said, was a series of quiet notes: but when Russia attempted to crush Tito or invade Czechoslovakia, everyone rallied to the aid of democratic principles and the West

³⁶ MEA (1970b), pp.84-84.

³⁷ Guyana Graphic, 26 February 1970, p.1. The Venezuelan ambassador in Georgetown is reported to have said that Guyanese soldiers had also been firing shots at its border posts since December 1969, *Guyana Graphic*, 7 March 1970, p.1. The Venezuelan government also informed the Security Council that it had no hostile intention towards Guyana, but sought reclamation of Essequibo, *ibid.*, 10 March 1970, p.1.

³⁸ See Ferguson (1999), p.101, for a list of the states with which Guyana established diplomatic relations between 1966 and 1985.

delivered a sharp rebuke to Russia. Guyana was sophisticated enough to understand that quiet notes were relevant at times..."

Questioning the remit of the Commonwealth, he continued:

"...but what really did the Commonwealth exist for if this was all the assistance Guyana got? Guyana felt disillusioned and bothered by what appeared to be discrimination on the basis of whether the would-be aggressor was communist or not."³⁹

Although the situation in Czechoslovakia hardly compared with that of the Rupununi rebellion, Burnham's emphasis was nevertheless on the need to protect the territorial integrity of small states. As such, he called for the Commonwealth to explore its potential to protect and preserve its members, especially small states' territorial integrity.⁴⁰ Burnham's lobbying at this Commonwealth meeting was rewarded by the expression of concern issued in the communiqué at the end:

"The Meeting also noted with concern and sympathy the difficulties which Guyana was experiencing in connection with Venezuela's claim to more than one-half of Guyana's territory. Acknowledging that threats to the territorial integrity of the State make inevitable the diversion of resources and energies from the constructive tasks of development, many members shared the view advanced by Guyana's Prime Minister that there was an urgent need for an international effort to secure the territorial integrity of every State - and especially of the small developing countries of the world."⁴¹

This confirmed CHOGM as a bedrock of support for Guyana's territorial integrity and hence an integral part of the government's international approaches.

At the regional level, the CARIFTA heads of government had expressed their solidarity with Guyana in the territorial controversy with Venezuela. As Manley notes:

"The heads of government for the region in their conference at Port of Spain, Trinidad, in February 1969, expressed their 'grave concern over the threats posed

³⁹ Report on Burnham's participation at the 1969 CHOGM, MEA (1969), p.60.

⁴⁰ Burnham quoted in *ibid.*, p.61.

⁴¹ "Final Communiqué", CHOGM, 7-15 January 1969, Commonwealth Secretariat (1987), p.139.

to Guyana's territorial integrity' and over 'the most recent instances of interference in her internal affairs.'"⁴²

This suggests that the GOG took the opportunity of the CARIFTA meeting to lobby for support, despite the organization only having economic and trade remits.

The courting of relations with Brazil as a strategic ally in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy continued as a lynchpin in the GOG's international approaches at the regional level. There are many facets which this took: for instance, technical cooperation was explored during a visit to Guyana from 15-18 July 1969 by a Brazilian professor, Barros Palissy, who served as the Technical Adviser to Brazil's National Service for Technical Apprenticeship. A month later, then Minister of State Ramphal, accompanied by senior personnel from the MFA, visited Brazil. The group's tour included meetings with the Brazilian president and senior officials at Itamaraty.⁴³ Various areas of cooperation were discussed, including agreements to implement a scholarship programme and the cultural exchanges. As an indication of the desire by Georgetown to enhance relations, the talks also centred on the decision to establish a Guyanese embassy in Brasilia.⁴⁴ Significantly, the ministerial visit was followed by a programme of military cooperation, with two senior GDF officers embarking on a training course in jungle warfare at Brazil's Instruction Centre for Jungle Warfare in Manaus. Other areas of cooperation, including trade between the two states, and exchanges of visits, such as that of Guyana's Minister of Trade to Brasilia and of the

⁴² Manley (1979), pp.34-35, quoting from the communiqué issued at the end of the Conference.

⁴³ MEA (1969), pp.51-52.

⁴⁴ "Communiqué" issued at the end of the visit in *ibid.*, pp.52-53. Guyana's first ambassador to Brazil, Ann Jardim, later presented her credentials to the Brazilian president on 13 November 1969, *ibid.*, p.54.

renown Brazilian educator professor Gilberto Freyre to the University of Guyana - were undertaken in 1969.

As was the case during the period discussed in chapter 3, Britain was clandestine but active in smoothing the way for closer relations between Georgetown and Brasilia.

As a British despatch records:

"We [Britain] have been giving the Brazilians any information relevant to their border control activities and have been quietly encouraging their stand against Venezuelan territorial claim...This discreet co-operation is welcome here and there are no signs of the Brazilian stand weakening. Nevertheless, the Brazilians have played their own hand up till now and have shown little disposition to discuss their policy with others: they are clearly anxious not to prejudice unnecessarily their relations with Venezuela."⁴⁵

Even with Itamaraty exercising the diplomatic balancing act with Venezuela, the British intervention was significant in smoothing the trajectory of Brazil's growing ties with Georgetown. So in response to perceived threats from Caracas in 1969 and early 1970, the Burnham government deployed its foreign policy strategies at the regional and international levels as the means of defence at its disposal.

Part II: The Period of the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement **Guyana-Venezuela Relations**

Washington's continued interest in ensuring Burnham remained in power was an important driving force behind the negotiations that led to the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement. The Protocol of Port-of-Spain, as it is more commonly known, was signed in Trinidad, on 18 June 1970 by representatives from Britain, Guyana and Venezuela.⁴⁶ It amounted to a de facto moratorium of twelve years on the territorial controversy, with the

⁴⁵ J. Russell, Rio to FCO, 1 July 1969, FCO 7/1325/1.

⁴⁶ See Appendix 6 for the full text of the Protocol.

opportunity for a renewal at the end of that period. The Protocol also put into suspension Article IV of the Geneva Agreement which dealt with the UN charter's Article 33 mechanisms for peaceful resolutions of disputes.⁴⁷ We can now gain an insight from Department of States files into the factors that lay behind the signing of the Protocol, including the role of Eric Williams, within whose good offices the Protocol was brokered. First, however, we turn our attention to the reasoning provided by one writer who did not have access to declassified foreign policy material at the time of her writing.

Braveboy-Wagner argues that Williams, who had sent messages to both governments in Guyana and Venezuela in the wake of the Leóní decree of 1968 urging a peaceful resolution, later expressed an interest in facilitating a resolution.⁴⁸ Given that Trinidad had good relations with Guyana and Venezuela, both of which needed the good offices of a third party, Port-of-Spain was also an obvious venue for meetings between the two sides. She notes that for the GOG, the motivating factors in signing the Protocol was the understandable need to wrest itself from the territorial conflict in order to concentrate on development.⁴⁹ Braveboy-Wagner bases her arguments about the factors influencing the Venezuelan government's decision to sign the Protocol from insights provided by Hermann Gonzalez-Oropeza of that country's foreign ministry. These are, firstly, Venezuela's border dispute with Colombia had been revived, and therefore, the Venezuelan government needed respite from at least one territorial problem. Secondly,

⁴⁷ See Appendix 5 for the full text of the Geneva Agreement.

⁴⁸ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.173-177.

⁴⁹ This had been established in the GOG's speeches on the territorial controversy, notably before the UN: "Statement by the Honourable S.S. Ramphal...during the debate on the Protocol of Port-of-Spain in the National Assembly, on 22nd June, 1970", MEA (1970a), p.14. See also Ramphal (1970), p.3, where Guyana's need to be free of territorial problems is cited not just for its own development purposes, but in terms of regional goals.

Venezuela's tarnished image as a third world country due mainly to Guyana's diplomacy at the UN. Thirdly, was the desire of the new COPEI administration for better relations with the English-speaking Caribbean.⁵⁰

The recently released Department of State files on the territorial controversy allow us to delve deeper into the factors behind the signing of the Protocol. The Venezuelan foreign minister, Calvani, was reported as favouring continued negotiation as the Mixed Commission neared its ending. This was also the preferred option of the US embassy in Caracas:

"...it is shortsighted for Guyana to miss the opportunity of continuing negotiations with Venezuela. The result of an end to bilateral discussions, as we see it here, would be an emotional build up on both sides and perhaps later lead to a confrontation of some kind. The British seem to appreciate this danger."

The same despatch cautioned against US intervention, especially given apparent British involvement:

"[British] Ambassador Hopson's active interest in this matter gives us hope that he may better able to achieve something at this end without any assist on our part. In fact it would probably complicate matters and erode the sound policy position we have maintained if we should insert our good offices."⁵¹

One such occasion necessitating Hopson's intervention came towards the end of the Mixed Commission talks when it was evident that it would end in deadlock.

"UK Ambassador Hopson informed EMBOFF [embassy official] that British 'leaned heavily of [sic] GOTT [government of Trinidad and Tobago] PRIMIN [prime minister] Williams during visit here last week to make strong pitch to GOV re need to meet soonest with Guyanese officials in order to discuss future of Mixed Commission and/or next steps for continuing negotiations re border dispute."⁵²

⁵⁰ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.173-175.

⁵¹ Telegram 182, Herron, Caracas to State Department, 15 January 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit. Unfortunately, the British records are not yet available to give further insight into Ambassador Hopson's activities.

⁵² Herron, Caracas to State Department, 9 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

The lobbying was successful since Venezuela dispatched its Foreign Policy Director, Marcial Perez Chiribogo, to Port-of-Spain for dialogue with Ramphal.

Both sides were interested in continuing negotiations, as is borne out in the agreement reached between the governments in Caracas and Georgetown. On the eve of the Mixed Commission's legal expiration on 17 February 1970, the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments agreed on an extension for a period of 90 days "...to prepare the final report".⁵³ This manoeuvre was used to facilitate further discussions between the two countries on how to proceed. The 90-day period was to "...be used for further discussion of alternative courses of action following the expiration of the Commission..."⁵⁴ The same Intelligence Note from the US Bureau of Intelligence and Research records the Guyanese government's hopes of securing a lengthy moratorium on the territorial controversy. "Ramphal...said that Guyana hopes to persuade Venezuela to accept a 25 to 30 year 'moratorium' on the boundary dispute so that the process of development can go on." While welcoming the 90-day proposal as "a positive development", the Intelligence Note cautions, "we do not believe, however, that the two parties are any closer to a solution of the dispute". Further, Guyana's hopes of a long moratorium were recorded with pessimism: "We do not share Ramphal's hope that the Venezuelans will agree to an extended moratorium. They favour continuing talks which would lead to a swift 'resolution' of the dispute and a resolution always has included a concession, preferably territorial, by Guyana."⁵⁵ It is interesting to observe at this stage that a conclusion to the controversy was viewed as involving some sort of territorial

⁵³ Intelligence Note, 17 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

concession and not specifically the entire Essequibo. This factor is a recurring theme in Caracas' deliberations with Georgetown, as will become evident in subsequent chapters.

The Guyanese Minister of State [with responsibility for foreign affairs], Ramphal was given the responsibility "...for developing GOG position on alternative courses of action in dispute..."⁵⁶ Although Braveboy-Wagner notes that the talks which led to the Protocol had started in March 1970, it is now evident that Ramphal had been making attempts to start up a dialogue outside of the framework of the Mixed Commission since January 1970, that is a month before the Mixed Commission was due to expire.⁵⁷ "Guyanese thinking is leading to [the] conclusion that talks would perhaps be more effective if carried out directly at government-to-government level."⁵⁸ Such thinking was also in line with that of a US diplomat, as recorded in the memorandum of a conversation on the territorial controversy between US and Venezuelan diplomats: "The reporting officer added his personal views that there may be need for a high-level Venezuela/Guyana discussion outside of the Mixed Commission to break the apparent impasse."⁵⁹ Although not stating why, the same Memorandum records the view of the Brazilian Chargé d'Affaires in Caracas: "Caldera and Calvani were serious in their expressed desire to find a peaceful solution to the border problem with Guyana."⁶⁰ Braveboy-Wagner's arguments about the Venezuelan government having to pay attention to its revived border dispute with Colombia while at the same time wanting to repair its tarnished image in the Third World and to foster relations with the English-speaking

⁵⁶ Telegram 106, King to State Department, 3 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁵⁷ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.174.

⁵⁸ Telegram 47, 17 January 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁵⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, 6 January 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Caribbean, may provide the reasons why the Venezuelan government favoured such an outcome.

Despite its professed neutrality on the controversy, Calvani was aware that Washington favoured Burnham's leadership in Guyana. A US diplomat recorded a conversation with Caldera in which he "...complained that the US had done nothing to help Venezuela obtain a redress of the situation...He [Caldera] added that his government actually felt that, if anything, the US was favourable to the Burnham government in this matter."⁶¹ Later, Calvani vocalised his awareness of US policy on Burnham:

"He [Caldera] then stated that the GOV understood and respected the major aspects of US policy on this problem. Our efforts to favour Burnham and to help Guyana, a new and poor state, were meritorious in his eyes. Our preoccupation about a possible Jagan and/or communist takeover of Guyana was shared by the GOV."⁶²

Calvani's understanding of the geopolitical situation and his endorsing of it, is evident. The same telegram records Calvani's expressed desire for the good offices to help in carrying forward the discussions between Caracas and Georgetown.

Washington was keen to encourage dialogue between Guyana and Venezuela. As such, it was felt that the US should encourage the process being developed:

"I believe it is in our interest to do whatever may be appropriate to encourage the GOV to be receptive to Ramphal's efforts [to] reopen channels of communication in order [to] discuss future course of relationship between [the] two governments."⁶³

Later we learn that Venezuela's foreign minister preferred "quiet diplomacy" in the negotiations.⁶⁴ It was within those secret negotiations that a meeting of minds occurred

⁶¹ Telegram 108, Georgetown to State Department, 10 January 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁶² Telegram, 644, Caracas to State Department, 7 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁶³ Telegram 73, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁶⁴ Telegram 15502, Georgetown to State Department, 1 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

between Calvani and Ramphal.⁶⁵ This factor points to both the advantages of secret diplomacy and to the oft-ignored importance of the interaction of personalities in negotiations. The private deliberations were to last until the signing of the Protocol in June 1970, with the exception of limited briefing to the media as the following report from the *Guyana Graphic* indicates:

"Surrounded by a blanket of secrecy, officials of the Governments of Venezuela and Guyana, at the boardroom of the Guyana Development Corporation, yesterday afternoon began talks which appeared to be a continuation of the dialogue started in Tobago a while ago, to lay the foundation for talks at a future date between top-level parties of the two Governments with the view of a peaceful settlement of the Venezuela-Guyana border dispute."⁶⁶

Even with the intervention of Eric Williams and the behind the scenes manoeuvrings of countries such as the US, the Protocol meant effectively that both the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments were able to maintain some degree of control over the next stage in the controversy. One alternative, namely the ICJ, would have wrested control from both sides.

It is worth us exploring the role of the Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Eric Williams, in the Protocol of Port-of-Spain, since this has not been the subject of much academic enquiry. His involvement reveals yet another instance of Cold War concerns over the GOG and the perceived need to moderate Venezuelan behaviour in order to aid Burnham. Through Rout's research, it is known that the Venezuelans suggested that Williams should act an intermediary between Caracas and Georgetown, as the negotiations developed outside of the framework of the Mixed Commission. He is precise in stating that the Trinidadian prime minister was approached during a state visit

⁶⁵ Interview with Shridath Ramphal, 23 March 2001.

⁶⁶ *Weekend Post and Sunday Argosy*, 15 March 1970, p.3.

to Venezuela from 2-6 February 1970.⁶⁷ Evidence in State Department files on the Venezuelan government's motives in seeking out Williams does back at least one point made by Braveboy-Wagner. That is to say, the Caldera government's desire to build up relations with the English-speaking Caribbean was an instrumental factor in the willingness of Caracas to engage in meaningful dialogue. This can be gleaned from the following telegram report:

"I referred to the conversation which I had had...with...Calvani and exchange of views we had had on the insecurity of the Guyanese people and the Guyanese government who felt they were facing the world alone and in a vacuum. The president said he appreciated this feeling and that he had talked to Prime Minister Eric Williams about it. In fact, he said that he had invited Williams to Venezuela at this time in an effort to demonstrate Venezuelan goodwill toward the areas of the Caribbean populated in large by the black race."⁶⁸

Payne argues that Caracas' Caribbean policy was developed by the Caldera government but bore more fruit under his successor Carlos Andrés Pérez who had the petro-dollars to back it up.⁶⁹ It may be argued that the emergence of such a policy was a motivating factor in the GOV seeking Williams' good offices, given his influence in the region within which Venezuela wished to focus its foreign policy. Evidence exists to suggest that the Venezuelan foreign minister, Aristides Calvani, certainly wanted to rid his government of the territorial controversy:

"Calvani added that this was an inherited problem, one created by the Betancourt-Leoni administration in which former foreign minister Marcos Falcon Briceño played a key role. He asserted it was not a popular issue but one kept alive by an elite group who were supported by important public information media."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Rout (1971), p.95.

⁶⁸ Telegram 644, Herron, Caracas to State Department, 7 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁶⁹ Payne (1984), pp.114-117.

⁷⁰ Telegram 509, Herron, Georgetown to State Department, 2 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

There was, therefore, a paradigm shift in the Venezuelan government's position on the controversy under Caldera. Another factor influencing the Caldera government's choice of Williams may have been the latter's recently successful good offices in the Guyana-Suriname dispute which led to progressive discussions on the way forward in April 1970.⁷¹

There were benefits for Williams from the use of his good offices: for instance, the influence to be derived from brokering a role between Caracas and Georgetown on a major and contentious issue. Williams' fear of the Guyanese opposition leader, Jagan's return to power, may have motivated his desire to become involved, as can be deduced from the following despatch:

"...Williams expressed concern over possibility that Jagan might make comeback in next Guyanese elections. He had said Burnham speaks optimistically of his ability to drain off strength from Jagan and of political effect of West Indian immigration. However, based on his own political experience in Trinidad, he is worried that Burnham's optimism may not have sound foundation....He said as election day approaches, race becomes a more important factor. Williams asked if Embassy Georgetown's assessment of Jagan's strength and prospects in next elections could be shared with him".

Moreover, it is noted, "[the] thought of Jagan coming to power is as abhorrent to Williams as it is to us, and I hope we can provide him with something that will be responsive to his request."⁷² There was, in effect, a meeting of minds between Port-of-Spain and Washington on Jagan. The Trinidadian leader was provided with what was likely to have been interpreted by him as a positive analysis of Burnham's chances of remaining in power:

⁷¹ See telegrams 44, 289,299, 359, 364, 806, 975, 1237 from Georgetown and The Hague, to Statement Department, Pol 32-1 Guyana-Surinam, RG 59 files. See also Airgram of 22 April 1970 which contains the communiqué issued at the end of the talks.

⁷² Telegram 128, Elwood, Port-of-Spain to Statement Department, 25 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

"Next election will not be held until 1973 and there are obvious hazards in attempting [to] predict [the] outcome of election so far in advance. However if present political-racial stability is maintained and if out come [of] Venezuela-Guyana border dispute is not heavily damaging to Burnham, we anticipate that he will retain control of the government."⁷³

If the prime minister of Trinidad required confirmation of the importance of a successful outcome of Guyana-Venezuelan negotiations and justification for his involvement, this was given in his discussions with the State Department: "Our caveat that Burnham's political future will depend heavily on his ability [to] handle border problem [was] seized on by Williams to concentrate most of our discussion on Guyana/Venezuela dispute."⁷⁴

The files of the Trinidad and Tobago foreign ministry reveal a broader show of interest on Williams' part in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy than was noted by Braveboy-Wagner. In the wake of the Leoni decree, we gain an impression of the salience of the issue to Port-of-Spain:

"Owing to the human relations and economic cooperation between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela on the one hand and Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana on the other hand, the policy of Trinidad and Tobago at this serious stage of the dispute should be to continue to try and foster good relations with these two countries, dissuade the use of force and encourage a return to the observance of the Geneva Agreement and the instrument of the Mixed Commission."⁷⁵

Earlier, in 1966, the government of Trinidad had actually inaugurated a Committee on the Guyana-Venezuela controversy:

"As a result of a letter dated January, 1966, from the Ambassador for Venezuela advising that the Venezuelan Government was preparing several missions to visit shortly hemispheric countries in order to put forward Venezuela's positive claim in the boundary dispute with British Guiana in the hope of winning the maximum support from these countries, and that Trinidad and Tobago would be visited by one of such missions, Cabinet on the recommendation of the Ministry of External

⁷³ Telegram 198, King, Georgetown to State Department, 26 February 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁷⁴ Telegram 170, Symington, Port-of-Spain to State Department, 7 March 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁷⁵ File EA (68) Bi. 56, 18 July 1968, in POL No.1/41/1, Vol.III, Ministry of External Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago.

Affairs agreed to set up a Committee on the 'Boundary Dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana'".⁷⁶

It can be argued that such a major step is indicative of the recognized importance of the controversy to Trinidad and Tobago, given its geopolitical interests in not having a Marxist government in Guyana and in proximity/relation to Venezuela. The government in Caracas was also aware of these factors, elaborating further:

"La situación geográfica y la creciente presencia venezolana en esta isla, han forzado al Primer Ministro Eric Williams a mantener una objetiva e imparcial posición ante las presiones guyanesas encaminadas a hacerla variar. Aún no se conocen signos que puedan predecir una ruptura de esta posición equilibrada por parte de Trinidad y Tobago. Sin embargo, su identificación por razones históricas, geográficas y mas recientemente por económicas (CARIFTA) con Guyana, deben obligar a esa Cancillería a ser extremadamente cuidadosa en la conducción de los negocios politico-económicos trinito-venezolanos."⁷⁷

In addition, it should be noted that the governments of Trinidad and Venezuela had begun a period of good relations since 1965, when the latter removed a surtax on the former's imports which had been a source of dispute between the two states. The relationship underwent a turnaround to the extent that Caracas had sponsored Trinidad's entry into the OAS in 1967, while Port-of-Spain sponsored the Venezuelan candidate for Secretary-General of that organization.⁷⁸ All of these recent factors had put Trinidad and in particular Williams, in a strategic position to intervene between Caracas and Georgetown. He was to preside over the initial talks at official level followed by the negotiations at ministerial level that ultimately led to signing of the Protocol.⁷⁹ Given the involvement

⁷⁶ LEG:2/3/2 in *ibid.*

⁷⁷ MRE (1968), p.25

⁷⁸ Gill in Manigat (1976b), p.472.

⁷⁹ Telegrams 118 and 1108 from the US embassies in Georgetown and Port-of-Spain of 23 February 1970 and 9 March 1970 respectively, give details of Guyana and Venezuela's proposals. The former favoured a 30-year moratorium while the latter favoured 2-4 years. See also telegram 1268 (19 March 1970) from the US embassy, Caracas; and telegrams 258 (14 March 1970); 324 (6 April 1970), 390 (16 April 1970), 526

of Washington and Williams' own motivations in brokering the Protocol, which we have established, the following conclusion made by Glasgow lacks some validity: "To all appearances, the solution to his problem was regionally induced particularly as the United States had 'washed her hands of it' in an attempt to avoid alienating two of her hemispheric allies."⁸⁰

Although amounting to a moratorium, the Protocol did not officially provide a solution to the controversy, as indicated by Article V(2): "The signing and the continuance of this Protocol shall not be interpreted in any way as a renunciation or diminution of any rights which any of the parties may have on the date on which the Protocol is signed or as a recognition of any situation, practice or claim existing at that date."⁸¹ Despite this Article, the Protocol was not well received by the political opposition in both Guyana and Venezuela. In the former, the PPP which had regarded the Geneva Agreement as a "sell-out" and "part of the Anglo-American conspiracy", subsequently viewed the Protocol as "...the second act of betrayal by the PNC government...and another step in the same direction [of Anglo-American conspiracy]".⁸² The general secretary of the PPP, Donald Ramotar, has elaborated further on his party's historical position on the Protocol, which has been to locate it within the cold war conspiracy framework that it has viewed the territorial controversy:

"We said that all that [the Protocol] was doing was not solving any problem, what it was doing was postponing the problem: we were carrying the line at the time that it was quite probably an American position to put in cold storage to be used again."

(20 May 1970) from the American Embassy, Georgetown on the discussions during the negotiations, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁸⁰ Glasgow in Davis (1975), p.190.

⁸¹ See Appendix 6 for full text of the Protocol.

⁸² Nagamootoo (1981), p.17. See also *Sunday Graphic*, 21 June 1970, p.1.

It is noteworthy that with the PPP in government, since 1992 to the time of writing, the party's position has altered regarding the conspiracy theory. As Ramotar concedes:

"I am not sure if that was a correct analysis; whether the Americans were that involved at that period of time because at that period of time they were getting a little bit discontented with the PNC..."⁸³

This new contention has merit because 1970 was the year that the Burnham-led government declared Guyana a "cooperative socialist republic"; a factor that was not likely to be well-received in Washington. However, as we have seen, Washington and Port-of-Spain still favoured Burnham, given that the alternative was the Marxist, Cheddi Jagan. Ramotar now admits that even though postponement did not offer a solution, it had advantages: "I suppose in the practical politics of the time, probably it was not a bad decision to put it on hold so that you can focus on other things."⁸⁴ The freezing of the controversy did provide the PNC government with the opportunity to pursue its "socialist" and third world foreign policy.⁸⁵

Opposition to the Protocol was strong in the Venezuelan congress which had not been informed by the Caldera government prior to its signatory and which did ratify it.⁸⁶ This resulted in the Protocol being "...valid only as an executive agreement and tends to suspend Guyana/Venezuelan relations in limbo."⁸⁷ In reality, the Protocol did have de facto governmental recognition in both Caracas and Georgetown and significantly for both, the Venezuelan government did have the backing of the country's armed forces.⁸⁸

⁸³ Interview with Donald Ramotar, 13 May 2000.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ For instance, diplomatic relations were established with Havana in 1972, and Guyana applied for 'formal association' with COMECON in 1977, IISS (1973) and (1978) respectively.

⁸⁶ *Guyana Graphic*, 20 June 1970, p.1. Airgram A-532, 5 October 1970, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

⁸⁷ Airgram, A-532, 5 October 1970, Pol 32-, op.cit.

⁸⁸ *Guyana Graphic*, 28 June, p.1, and 11 July 1970, p.1.

The signing of the Protocol led to a marked improvement in relations between Guyana and Venezuela, as a newspaper records:

"The Protocol of Port of Spain was intended to establish a climate of friendship and understanding between Guyana and Venezuela and had succeeded in the first few years of its existence to produce dramatic improvements in the relations between the two countries according to Cheryl Miles of the Foreign Ministry."⁸⁹

It is worth exploring the developments in the relationships between Georgetown and Caracas at this time.

The joint communiqué issued at the end of the signing of the Protocol referred to the agreement to establish a Joint Committee between Guyana and Venezuela, the key task of which was to facilitate a reduction in problems between the two states.⁹⁰ Several enquiries by this writer, including interviews with senior diplomats in Georgetown and Caracas have, however, failed to shed any light on the existence of this Committee.

Although the Protocol set the stage for a plateau in friendly relations between the governments in Caracas and Georgetown, there were periods of uncertainty in the relations between the two. For instance, in 1972, a US telegram noted, "Ramphal, in particular, distressed at [the] exclusion [of] Guyana from [the] Law of Sea Conference called by Venezuela...He has discussed [the] matter with [the] Venezuelan FONMIN [foreign minister] Calvani but received no satisfactory explanation [for] Venezuela's actions."⁹¹ Guyana's exclusion, may not have been the result of a deliberate attempt by Venezuela to shun it, as this telegram indicates:

⁸⁹ *Guyana Chronicle*, 28 November 1981, p.12.

⁹⁰ "Communiqué issued at Conclusion of Meeting in Port-of-Spain between the Honourable S.S. Ramphal...and Dr. Aristides Calvani, Foreign Minister of Venezuela on 18th June, 1970", pp.20-21, MEA (1970a).

⁹¹ Telegram 1567, Georgetown to State Department, 6 November 1971, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

"Official GOV reason for not inviting Guyana is that geographically [the] latter appears to be [an] Atlantic, not [a] Caribbean state. Though there is some sophistry in this position, privately FONMINISTRY source has indicated basic reason for not inviting Guyana is [the] troublesome 1968 Leoní Decree pertaining to [the] territorial sea off [the] area in dispute."⁹²

The problem over this Conference served as an indication that although the territorial controversy had effectively been put on hold, existing problematic areas were resolved. Indeed, Guyana had never relaxed totally in relation to Venezuela.⁹³ Nevertheless, the Protocol was to usher in the period of a number of governmental visits on both sides and "functional co-operation" in a number of areas.⁹⁴ Such interaction Jackson has argued, "...can sometimes be seen as not solving the problem but creating the framework for solving the problem."⁹⁵

The expression of good relations between Guyana and Venezuela was demonstrated on a practical level by the first visit of a Venezuelan minister to Guyana. As the following telegraph despatch notes, "As a gesture [of] friendship and follow-up to [the] Protocol of Port of Spain, GOV headed by Development Minister Haydee Castillo de Lopez Acosta arrived [in] Guyana March 5 [1971]."⁹⁶ The purpose of the visit was to discuss technical cooperation between the two countries.⁹⁷ The Venezuelan ministerial team's trip was followed shortly afterwards by a reciprocal visit headed by Guyana's

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Interview with Rudy Collins, 9 September 1999.

⁹⁴ Functional cooperation is defined as non-political ties between states e.g. economic or social cooperation. These links are expected to facilitate understanding and peaceful relations between states. See Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.181-182, for further details on the theories of the functionalist and neo-functionalist schools.

⁹⁵ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 30 August 1999.

⁹⁶ Telegram 318, 8 March 1971, Devine, Georgetown to State Department, Pol 32-, op.cit.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

deputy prime minister, Ptolemy Reid. This was the first by a Guyanese minister to Caracas since independence,⁹⁸ and it was to have had positive effects:

"It appears that the April 21 to 26 [1971] visit of Guyanese...Ptolemy Reid and his high-level mission to Venezuela accomplished what both sides had hoped for, in that a general atmosphere of cordiality and mutual respect was noteworthy on both sides. Substantive discussions of possible economic cooperation in a number of fields were the central feature of the visit, but apparently no definite agreements were reached."⁹⁹

Although no firm agreements were signed, the visit represented a positive step since the two governments were now engaging in discussions outside of their territorial controversy. Venezuela, for instance, participated in CARIFESTA, hosted in Georgetown in 1972.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the initial ministerial trip paved the way for further such exchanges between Caracas and Georgetown during which the discussions centred on economic, political and cultural cooperation. These included the visit of the Guyanese foreign minister, Ramphal in June 1974; Guyana's Minister of Economic Development, Desmond Hoyte, in April 1975; the Venezuelan foreign minister in the Carlos Andrés Pérez administration, Ramón Escovar Salom, in June 1975; and Fred Wills - Ramphal's successor as foreign minister - in November 1977.¹⁰¹

By far the most significant visits during this period, both in terms of political level and in making progress in a resolution of the territorial controversy, were those of Burnham to Caracas in September 1975 and that of Carlos Andrés Pérez to Georgetown in October 1978. Although not officially publicised, it has become widely known that

⁹⁸ Telegram 441, 31 March 1971, King, Georgetown to State Department, Pol 7 Guyana, RG 59.

⁹⁹ Airgram A-194, 3 May 1971, Caracas to State Department, Pol 32-1, op.cit.

¹⁰⁰ Ferguson (1999), p.263.

¹⁰¹ MRE (1975), p.241. See also MRE (1998), pp.353-365, for the various Aide Memoire and official correspondence that accompanied the ministerial visits. There were further discussions between Guyanese and Venezuelan foreign ministers at the UN. See for instance, document no.23, *ibid.*, p.353, for Aide Memoire following one such meeting between Ramphal and Escovar Salom in 1975.

during the latter visit Burnham and Andrés Pérez advanced the discussions on a solution to the controversy.¹⁰² It is here that we return to the theme of the land/sea concession first mooted during the negotiations that led to the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement. This centred on Venezuela reducing its claim significantly in exchange for an outlet to the Atlantic which would involve Guyana ceding a relatively small amount of territory adjacent to the sea.¹⁰³ Guyana would in turn have received development assistance from Venezuela.¹⁰⁴ The outlet to the Atlantic is part of Venezuela's Atlantic vision of power on the high seas and in particular its attempt to project itself beyond the Caribbean to places further afield, such as Africa. One Venezuelan diplomat offered the following metaphoric description:

"Venezuela has got access to the [Caribbean] sea, but it is a closed sea to a lake. Look at the borders of all the neighbours here [northern South America], one next to the other, then, you have a passage, small islands...[i.e. the Caribbean states]. We don't have access to the Atlantic, we have a swimming pool in our backyard, not in our front yard."¹⁰⁵

The Atlantic is also regarded in terms of strategic access to the Orinoco which in turn links with the Amazon and thus into the heart of South America.¹⁰⁶ Ewell has also suggested its importance vis-à-vis the country's petroleum movements and its imports. "The maintenance of open and peaceful sea lanes both through Lakes Maracaibo and through the Orinoco River to the Atlantic is necessary to the movement of Venezuelan petroleum and the large volume of imports."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² See for instance, Giacalone de Romero's thesis (1984), p.5.

¹⁰³ See for instance, Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.185 and Gill (1997). This discussion between the two leaders was also confirmed in anonymous interviews conducted by this writer with Venezuelan diplomats in Caracas.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous interview.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ewell in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1982), p.306.

One Venezuelan diplomat has argued that it was the Protocol which served as the hindrance to Burnham and Andrés Pérez putting their discussions into fruition: "The Protocol froze negotiations [on the territorial controversy]. Had the Protocol not existed, both countries would have been very happy now. They could have solved the problem and they could have enjoyed twenty years of love [to date]."¹⁰⁸ Despite this Venezuelan diplomat's interpretation of the impediment posed by the Protocol, it is doubtful whether the implementation of an agreement along the lines of the discussions held in 1978 would have been any simpler if the Protocol had not existed, given that both governments still had to gain popular support from their respective populace. This is a point made by former Guyanese foreign minister Ramphal: "I certainly felt that the Carlos Andrés Pérez period provided the most propitious time we had had to try to put the message to rest and I had personal contacts with [him] which to me justified that. But Burnham and Carlos Andrés Pérez had constituencies and so each was hampered to some extent."¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, it is the perception of the Venezuelan foreign minister at the time, Ramón Escovar Salom that Burnham was not serious in his discussions on achieving such a compromise solution:

"...I don't think that in Guyana there was any feeling to find a solution with Venezuela. But they were interested in money and in cooperation on hydroelectric power, bauxite etc. The only idea Burnham had in mind was to ask for money from Venezuela; he was not seriously in my mind looking for a solution with Venezuela."¹¹⁰

If this perception is correct then the Guyanese prime minister was merely manipulating the Venezuelan government's desire for an outlet to the sea in order to receive some of

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Shridath Ramphal, 23 March 2001.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Ramón Escovar Salom, 8 March 2000.

the benefits from the latter's oil wealth. The Trinidadian *Express* reported, however, that Burnham and Carlos Andrés Pérez failed to achieve what is termed this "symbolic cession" since the two leaders disagreed on the amount of territory to be ceded.¹¹¹

The Andrés Pérez administration also saw a period of hitherto relatively intense cooperation between Guyana and Venezuela. This period, it should be noted, was one of high oil prices following OPEC action and Venezuelan nationalization of its oil industry, the latter taking place on 1 January 1976. During his 1978 visit to Guyana, the Venezuelan president also expressed his support for the hydroelectric project located in the Upper Mazaruni area - within the territory being claimed by Venezuela - which the Guyanese government was proposing:

"Con relación a la posibilidad de la compra por parte de Venezuela de energía, el Presidente indicó la disposición de su país de financiar el estudio para la interconexión. Se consideró que se debía establecer un comité para estudiar el asunto de la posible participación de Venezuela en el proyecto hidroeléctrico."¹¹²

The supply of electricity from Guyana to Venezuela, if the project and the Perez government's interest became realities, would have represented a level of cooperation which only ten years previous, would have been unthinkable.

For this reason, we should explore some aspects of the functional cooperation between Guyana and Venezuela, which helped to foster a greater degree of interaction between the peoples of the two states and by definition furthered their understanding of each other. In the medical field, Venezuela provided treatment to some Guyanese patients in its more advanced teaching hospitals in Caracas with the collaboration of the

¹¹¹ *Express*, 22 June 1982, p.17.

¹¹² Document no. 30, "Memoranda presentada por los Gobiernos de Guyana y Venezuela con motivo de la visita oficial efectuada por el Presidente de Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez a la República Cooperativa de

Ministry of Health and Social Security in Georgetown.¹¹³ At the cultural level, the Venezuelan government opened a cultural centre in Georgetown, named after the famous Venezuelan writer, Rómulo Gallegos, in May 1972. An agreement on cultural, education and scientific cooperation was later signed in June 1974. Scholarships were also provided to Guyanese students to study Spanish in Venezuelan universities, thereby advancing the level of understanding between Guyana and Venezuela.¹¹⁴

In July 1975, discussions between Guyanese and Venezuelan officials took place centring on possible economic, technical and cultural cooperation between Caracas and Georgetown. This included the extension of a line of credit from the Andrés Bello government to its Guyanese counterpart for trade between the two states.¹¹⁵ Indicative of the level of cooperation between the two states at this time, Guyana was able to join the IDB with the support of the Venezuelan government in April 1974. This was a significant development given that it was Venezuela's action in 1964 that had led to the Act of Washington prohibiting Guyana's entry to the OAS because of the territorial controversy. While the ban remained, the separation of the criteria for membership of the economic wing from the main body meant that with Venezuela's support, Guyana was able to access much needed finance. In the words of Ramphal, this represented "una demostración tangible en el nuevo ambiente de las relaciones latinoamericanas."¹¹⁶ In addition, Guyana was a net beneficiary in its trading relations with Venezuela during this period. The trade, which centred on Venezuela's import of Guyana's bauxite, amounted

Guyana, y en el cual se trataron posibles compromisos en material de cooperación bilateral. Georgetown, Guyana, 18-20 de octubre de 1978", MRE (1998), pp.360-361.

¹¹³ See for instance, MRE (1975 and 1978), pp.241, 483 respectively.

¹¹⁴ MRE (1998), p.419.

¹¹⁵ Details in document no.27, *ibid.*, pp.357-358.

to \$7 million of the product in 1980.¹¹⁷ The gathering of Venezuelan troops in 1975/1976 on the Guyanese border following reports of Cuban troops in Guyana represented only a temporary glitch in Andrés Pérez-Burnham relations.

Aside from the growth in bilateral relations, there was also interaction between Georgetown and Caracas at the multilateral level, especially as the former began to broaden its participation in regional organizations. These included Sistema Económico de Latino America which Guyana joined in 1975; the Treaty of Amazonian Cooperation created in 1978; and Organizacion Latinoamericano de Energia in 1979.¹¹⁸

The International Approaches of the Government of Guyana

It is fair to argue, given the evidence from speeches made during a randomly selected year of good relations between Georgetown and Caracas that the territorial controversy was not the focal point of the government's international activities. Rather, the Burnham administration used the opportunity provided in such fora to vent its support for liberation movements, calls for a new international economic order, Namibian independence, economic cooperation amongst developing countries and other third world issues. It is in this context that the argument proffered by some writers about the foreign policy of the Burnham era being about securing domestic legitimacy through acclaimed international action rings through. Nevertheless, it is the contention here that even with this being the case, the international contacts made during such forays were vital when

¹¹⁶ Quoted in "Nota de Antonio José, Embajador Extraordinario y Plenipotenciario de Venezuela en Guyana para Efrain Schacht Aristeguieta, MRE...3 de mayo de 1974", *ibid.*, p.352.

¹¹⁷ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.186.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.190; and Bond in Ferris and Lincoln (1981), p.158.

conflict escalated. This contingency in relations was recognized by the Commonwealth study Group which looked at small states. "By giving support to one geographical group on an issue with which it may not be directly concerned, a small state can win reciprocal backing on an issue that is of present national interest."¹¹⁹

The Burnham government reduced the "virulence" of its international campaign against Venezuela in view of the improvement in relations between Georgetown and Caracas. One has the distinct impression that this administration continued to be distrustful of their Caracas counterparts despite the improvement in relations. Hence the PNC government continued to monitor Venezuelan action on the international stage, with a view to mounting its own campaign if required. This is made clear by Jackson who notes:

"Territorial integrity still remained a number one priority [during the life of the Protocol]. The amount of energy you had to expend was, however, reduced. As I have said, you can never get fatigued of your own interest. You would look for any opportunity that presented itself or if Venezuela thought they could indulge in one-upmanship. You had to be vigilant."¹²⁰

So while tensions had eased, the Guyanese administration was never quite relaxed in its relations with Venezuela. Indeed, the Burnham government utilized international issues of some relevance to draw direct attention to the state's position on the Guyana-Venezuela controversy. A perusal of governmental speeches indicates that the PNC government sought to draw international awareness to Venezuela's claims to Essequibo by utilizing every available forum.¹²¹ Even during high profile visits to Guyana not directly related to the territorial controversy, the principle of territorial integrity was

¹¹⁹ Commonwealth Study Group (1985), p.69.

¹²⁰ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 11 April 2000.

¹²¹ See, for instance, ministerial speeches in Jackson (1984), especially, pp.26, 37.

included on the agenda of discussions and/or speeches.¹²² Similarly, in the government's active support made for African liberation struggles, much was made of South Africa's violation of Namibian territory.¹²³

The very high-profile support for those liberation struggles can also be construed as a concomitant building of support amongst African countries for Guyana in the territorial controversy. Jackson has made explicit the link between Guyana's support for liberation struggles in Africa and Guyana's territorial problem in his speech at the International Forum on Southern Africa.¹²⁴ As Gill argues:

"...the government's activism in relation to these two matters [African liberation movements and South Africa] has been part of a broader policy in courting African Governments not only because of their importance in the non-aligned movement but crucially in order to be guaranteed of their diplomatic support if Venezuela were to re-activate the border issue."¹²⁵

A significant factor in the PNC's administrative drive to win the support of African government was the OAU's stance of respecting boundaries inherited from colonial times. The territorial controversy with Venezuela was, therefore, an integral part of the positioning that the Burnham government chose to take on certain issues. One foreign minister during the Burnham years, Jackson, has given an insight into the strategic positioning of his country on international issues where parallels could be drawn with Guyana's own territorial problems:

"One always sought to make a connection between our territorial circumstances with Venezuela with other issues of struggles for self-determination, for territorial integrity...there are certain principles [which were] important like sanctity of

¹²² See for instance, MEA (1969), p.68, on the visit of Dr Anton Vartusa, Deputy Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia.

¹²³ See for instance, (1980), pp.20, 25.

¹²⁴ Jackson (1981b), p.16.

¹²⁵ Gill in Manigat (1977b), p.373.

treaties, non-acquisition of territories by force and therefore any issue before the UN that involved those principles attracted our support..."¹²⁶

In this regard, support for East Timor, Western Sahara, Belize, and Israeli withdrawal of the occupied territories, was an integral part of the Burnham government's international strategies. As Jackson explains, "All those issues we supported fully because of their relevance...to our own situation and...because if you can cast your mind forward when you might have part of Guyana occupied, we'll need the support of the United Nations."¹²⁷ So, what may appear as adventurism, in terms of the PNC government's seeming determination to stand out as a radical third world government - which undoubtedly was an image it sought to project - was also part of that government's strategy of winning friends vis-à-vis the territorial integrity. The fact that the GOG could potentially derive support from particular states because of its own positioning on certain issues is indicative of the multifaceted characteristics of foreign policy which can be utilized for drawing international support on an issue affecting a state.

The signing of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain in June 1970 brought in a period of good relations, but while the Burnham-led government did not have grievances to draw to the attention of the UN General Assembly, it kept up an advocacy in UN fora on territorial integrity and related issues. For instance, the country continued to be active in the UN Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression a month after the Protocol had been signed.¹²⁸ Another example can be gleaned from a speech made by

¹²⁶ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 9 December 1999. See also "The Right to Live within Mutually Recognised Boundaries" under Guyana's support for a number of territorial related causes such as support for the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli conflict is listed in Jackson (1978), pp.44-45.

¹²⁷ Jackson (1999, mimeo.).

¹²⁸ Details on Guyana's activities in this Special Committee which met on 13-14 July 1970 in MEA (1970a), pp.74-75.

foreign minister, Jackson, to the UN on the Question of Disarmament where the opportunity to include the issue of territorial integrity did not go amiss: "In more specific terms, there needs to be greater respect for certain fundamental principles...Included among those principles...is the question of territorial integrity."¹²⁹ The Guyanese government's advocacy, albeit in a more subtle way, continued in the UN even during the validity of the Protocol.

Jackson has emphasised his government's international approach of continually lobbying members of the UN. There the strategy was on emphasising Guyana's "...strong legal and moral case". A perusal of his speeches at international organizations in 1979 – a year of relatively good relations between Georgetown and Caracas - reveals the territorial controversy not being a subject for discussion.¹³⁰ This does not mean that the GOG during such periods of cooperation did not conduct informal lobbying with delegates at the UN. As Jackson further explains, "We [the Guyanese government] were never afraid to explain our position with a view to winning friends in the event that you need their votes at the right time to support you when your case came before the [Security] Council."¹³¹

Guyana continued to be represented at meetings of the Commonwealth

throughout the 1970s. As the country pursued closer relations with Venezuela, this grouping of Britain and its former colonies did not express any views on the controversy

¹²⁹ Jackson (1978) p.22.

¹³⁰ Jackson (1979), speeches delivered at the Coordinating Bureau of the NAM; the 4th Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77; UNCTAD V; and the General Debate of the UN.

¹³¹ Jackson's speech (1999), mimeo.

in the communiqués issued between 1971 and 1979.¹³² This does not mean that the government did not continue to keep this organization aware of developments in the controversy. The point is that at a time of good relations there was not need to have the Commonwealth publicly endorsing Guyana's position on Essequibo.

On the issue of universal membership of the OAS in the region, the Commonwealth Caribbean countries were not ambiguous. Even before the formation of CARICOM in 1973, Eric Williams, whose country Trinidad and Tobago was the first English-speaking Caribbean country to be admitted to the OAS in 1967, had used the opportunity which membership presented to lobby initially for a separation of the membership criteria of the organization from the enjoyment of its economic bodies.¹³³ Still in the early years of his state's entry into the OAS, Williams, was astute in calling for some change in the regional organization without seeming to suggest total overhaul in the charter provisions. It was not long before that the relevant changes were made, thereby facilitating Guyana (and other states joining) as an Observer in February 1972.¹³⁴ In 1974 the country gained access to the financial arm of the OAS, the IDB.¹³⁵

The GOG continued to strengthen its ties with Brasilia, even though the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy had ceased to be a major problem during this period.

¹³² Commonwealth Secretariat (1987), pp.151-220.

¹³³ "Address by the Minister of External Affairs Mr. Francis Prevaux to the First Special Session of the General Assembly of the OAS, Washington, June 30, 1970" in Ministry of External Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago (1971), p.12; and "Speech at Opening of Inter-American Economic and Social Council Meeting in Caracas, 3 February 1970", in Sutton (1981), pp.397-399.

¹³⁴ See Airgram A-310, New Delhi to State Department, 12 January 1973, Pol 17 Guyana-India, RG59; and Bryan in Ince (1979), p.63.

¹³⁵ Telegram 9773, McClintock, Caracas to State Department, Pol 17 Guyana-Venezuela, RG59. Guyana later joined the IDB in 1976 - Wilson in Millett and Will (1979), p.266-284. Interview with Byron Blake, 1 May 2000. Braveboy-Wagner (1989), p.144; Wilson op.cit. and *Caribbean Contact*, January 1981, p.2.

There were visits of leading medical specialists from Brazil.¹³⁶ The Brazilian government also extended various lines of credit to the Burnham government since 1971, some used possibly for military purposes.¹³⁷

The value which the Burnham government placed on its relations with Brazil as a counter-weight to Caracas was evident in 1976 when it embarked on measures to win back the support of Brasilia. This need had arisen following the Brazilian government's stationing of troops on its border with Guyana as a result of reports about Cuban military personnel in Guyana. Jackson, who became the Guyanese foreign minister not long after this incident, has given an indication of his government's mobilization of its diplomatic machinery to win back the friendship of the Brazilian government:

"Once a report like that comes out [about Guyana being the base for the export of the Cuban revolution] you must be concerned and then your diplomacy is to convince the friendly countries that the report is baseless. And in this case, our prime strategy was to convince Brazil, so that if you convince Brazil then Venezuela is left on its own. Presumably too, Brazil, through its own channels would do its own checking and tell Venezuela it is not true."¹³⁸

The Burnham government clearly felt that convincing Brazil in the first instance was of more importance, before doing the same with Caracas. A key part of the strategy that Jackson described above, was the despatch of Guyana's then foreign minister, Fred Wills, who had succeeded Ramphal briefly, to Brasilia to offer reassurances to its government. This strategy worked, as is indicated by the following statement:

"[The governments of Guyana and Brazil] stressed the principles relating to the sovereignty and security of States, self-determination of peoples, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States interdiction of threats or use of force, the

¹³⁶ MEA (1970a), p.96.

¹³⁷ Braveboy-Wagner (1989), p.39.

¹³⁸ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 9 December 1999.

territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their boundaries as legally recognised by international treaties and agreements."¹³⁹

So not only had the Burnham government succeeded in winning back the friendship of its counterpart in Brasilia, but in relation to the controversy, the statement, like the one released earlier by Itamaraty in the wake of the Leoní decree of 1968, reiterated pronouncements on boundaries and treaties which inferred support for Guyana vis-à-vis Venezuela. From 1979, the Burnham government was able to strengthen its relationship with Brasilia through its interaction in the Joint Guyana-Brazil Mixed Commission.¹⁴⁰

Summary

The Burnham years, have to date, represented the longest era of a single government in the post-independence state of Guyana. The period covered in this chapter, 1969-1980, was one of contrast, both in the evolvement of the territorial controversy and the trajectory of Guyana's international affairs. The contentious relationship with Venezuela, which characterized the coalition years of government in Georgetown, was to continue for the first year of the Burnham-only administration. Declassified records of the State Department and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have revealed continued behind-the-scenes involvement of the US and HMG with the task of ensuring that Venezuelan action did not adversely affect Burnham's grip on power. That the Guyanese prime minister was key to the cold war concerns within which the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy became embroiled is evident not just from

¹³⁹ Extract from communiqué in Jackson (1981a), p.37.

¹⁴⁰ Kirton in Jeffrey and Menke (1991), pp.218-219 and Manigat in Heine and Manigat (1988), pp.262-274, provide discussions on Brazilian foreign policy and the motivations for that country's pursuit of closer ties with Guyana and other countries in Latin America from the late 1970s.

US and HMG efforts to intervene on his behalf, but also in Caracas and Port-of-Spain's actions. The Venezuelan government was cognizant of the US's view on Burnham and how this impacted on Venezuela. At the same time, Caracas expressed concern about what it perceived to be a lack of assistance for its cause. Williams' motivation for intervening in the controversy was guided by his own fears about Cheddi Jagan's communism.

The Protocol of Port-of-Spain provided the opportunity for an improvement in relations. It also facilitated the expansion of Guyana's foreign policy and international activities as the state's diplomatic machinery was relieved significantly of the burdens relating to the controversy. These factors have led some critics to charge that Burnham's foreign policy was Machiavellian in character and about securing legitimacy. It would be foolhardy not to recognize that in seeking and winning regional/international support for its territorial controversy, both at times of conflict and cooperation, the Burnham-led PNC administration was not also gaining prestige from its forceful and astute arguments on the international stage. The impressions created there would certainly have had benefits on the home front given the GOG's diminishing credibility there. It was during the negotiations for the Protocol that the idea of a reduced claim was first mooted. This was later elaborated on by the Carlos Andrés Pérez administration as a cession of land by Guyana in order to facilitate Venezuela's access to the Atlantic Ocean. Although nothing was conceded, this issue signalled a recognition by Caracas that it may not be able to gain the whole of Essequibo, even though the "reclamación" remained official policy.

Chapter 5:
**The Burnham Years 1981-1985: from Conflict to Limited
Cooperation**

Part I: Guyana's Relations with Venezuela: the end of the Protocol

The focal point of part one of the present chapter will be an examination of the return of tensions between Georgetown and Caracas from 1981-1983, following the latter's signal of its intention not to renew the Protocol. This marked a recommencement of the GOG's full-blown international approaches which I will examine. The second part of this chapter looks at the search for a mechanism within which to approach the controversy following the expiration of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain.

Ramphal's optimism in 1970 that "...the Protocol is so framed that the emphasis is upon the renewal of this every twelve years"¹ was not to be realised. The Venezuelan government of COPEI's Luis Herrera Campíns, which had taken power in March 1979, implemented substantial changes in the relationship between Guyana and Venezuela, altering the cooperative path which had existed for much of the seventies. In the first instance, as Payne contends, the new government "...set about the conduct of Venezuelan foreign policy in a distinctly more conservative, less flamboyant style than that of its predecessor."² This change at the governmental level and in the foreign policy direction, especially regarding Venezuela's approach to the territorial controversy, impacted negatively on relations between Georgetown and Caracas. The clear indication that the Protocol would not be renewed ushered in a return to a period of heightened tensions in Guyana, the likes of which had not been witnessed since the 1960s. Several factors contributed to the sense of fear in Georgetown, resulting in the government's full-scale diplomatic onslaught against Venezuela in international institutions, groupings and

¹ "Statement by the Honourable S.S. Ramphal...in the National Assembly, on 22nd June 1970", MEA (1970a), p.16.

² Payne (1984), p.119.

individual states. Before examining those initiatives on the world stage, I will explore the factors, real or perceived, which created an atmosphere of alarm and unease in Guyana.

There were early signs that the Herrera Campíns administration was not as amenable to cooperation with its counterpart as had been the case during the Carlos Andrés Pérez government. One such indicator was the new government's attitude to its Guyanese counterpart's proposed hydroelectric project in Upper Mazaruni, which is located in Essequibo. The Venezuelan foreign minister in the Herrera Campíns government, Alberto Zambrano Velasco, expressed reservations about this project to his Guyanese counterpart while at the UN in 1980.³ Later, in June 1981, the Venezuelan government wrote to the World Bank, from which Guyana was seeking funding for the Upper Mazaruni hydroelectric project, to register its objections. These were based on Venezuela's claims to Essequibo and that the project would alter the physical environment of that territory.⁴ The GOG also accused Caracas of lobbying the European Economic Community against participation in Essequibo's development.⁵ It should be noted that objections were also raised by international environmentalists concerned about the effects on some of Guyana's Amerindian population.⁶ The Venezuelan protest marked a signal change in the relations between Caracas and Georgetown, since, as will be recalled, the Andrés Pérez administration not only supported this project, but had also

³ Summary from Venezuelan classified records in MRE (1998), p.421.

⁴ Document no.42, "Carta de José Alberto Zambrano Velasco, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores para el Presidente del Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento, sobre la posición del Gobierno de Venezuela ante la solicitud de préstamo hecha por el Gobierno de Guyana para el Proyecto de la Represa del Alto Mazaruni. Caracas, 8 de junio de 1981", MRE (1998), pp.376-377. See Hoyte (1981) for Guyana's letter from its Minister of Economic Planning and Finance, Desmond Hoyte, to the World Bank, in response to the Venezuelan letter.

⁵ "Speech made by Guyana's Prime Minister...Ptolemy Reid to the 36th Session of the United Nations General Assembly", 24 September 1981, reprinted in *Guyana Chronicle*, 16 October 1981, p.1.

⁶ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.198.

discussed the possibility of electricity supply from it to Venezuela. The following year, Guyana was excluded from the terms of the San Jose Agreement signed in 1980 under which Venezuela, along with Mexico, agreed to supply oil at preferential rates, to poorer countries in the region, including the issuing of credits for the purchase of that oil.⁷

It was after an official visit by Burnham from 2-3 April 1981 that the Venezuelan government first signalled its intention not to renew the Protocol. During the visit, discussions centred on a range of regional and international issues of interest to both Guyana and Venezuela.⁸ Despite expressions of cordiality during the visit, immediately afterwards, on 4 April 1981, a communiqué issued from the Miraflores governmental palace in Caracas stated that Venezuela would not be renewing the Protocol when its 12-year period expired the following year and that the government did not support Guyana's hydroelectric project. Not only was Caracas not willing to extend the life of the Protocol, it also sought to frame its perspective on Essequibo as a colonial wrong which it intended to right:

"El Presidente Herrera Campíns, en consecuencia, reiteró el rechazo de Venezuela a cualquier compromiso incompatible con la reclamación venezolana y con la aspiración nacional de obtener la reparación de la grave injusticia cometida contra nuestro país por la voracidad de los imperios coloniales...En tal sentido, el Presidente Herrera Campíns reiteró el rechazo venezolano al proyecto hidroeléctrico del Alto Mazaruni."⁹

Guyana's foreign minister Rashleigh Jackson indicated that the Venezuelan decision about the Protocol was not a surprise, but his government would have welcomed an extension. "We knew before we left that Venezuela was not going to renew the Protocol

⁷ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.190, 231-232; and Giacalone de Romero (1984), mimeo., p.6.

⁸ See documents nos. 34 and 35 in MRE (1998), pp. 364-370; and OP (1981), pp.9-16.

⁹ Document no. 36, MRE (1998), p.370.

of Port-of-Spain. They were not inclined to do so. If they were, we would not have objected."¹⁰

Burnham did not waste time in seizing the opportunity provided by Herrera Campíns' emotive statement on the controversy to add a new challenge into the dialectic between Georgetown and Caracas. His response to journalists in Caracas had already added a new dimension in the territorial controversy between the two states. In a statement displaying his legal skills Burnham contended:

"Even if both the [1899] Award and the boundary laid down pursuant thereto are invalid, the land claimed by Venezuela does not automatically go to her...In such a situation, whatever settlement procedure is adopted, account will have to be taken of all the claims of both sides, including in particular- (1) claims by Guyana to the Amakura, Barima and Cuyuni areas, which we lost to Venezuela as a result of the Award; and (ii) claims by Guyana based upon her possession and occupation right up to comparatively recent times when Venezuela first formally rejected the validity of the 1899 award."¹¹

This served as notice that the Venezuelan rejection of the 1899 Award would not only mean Caracas' claim to Essequibo, but that if the Guyanese accepted the Venezuelan argument about the award, this would result in a return to the claims of either side, as they were prior to the arbitration award. An obvious deduction, but one which had not featured in the Venezuelan approach. The decision of the Herrera Campíns government not to renew the Protocol was communicated formally to the Burnham government in writing on 11 December 1981, six months before the expiration of the Protocol, as required in Article V of the said document.¹²

¹⁰ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 9 December 1999.

¹¹ Press statement, 8 April 1981, OTP (1981), pp.16-17. See also, *Caribbean Contact*, May 1981, p.18.

¹² *Guyana Chronicle*, 12 December 1982, p.1; and MRE (1982), pp.144-145. See Appendix 6 on the Protocol.

So why was the Protocol not renewed by Herrera Campíns? Braveboy-Wagner has argued that a number of factors may have influenced this decision. Firstly, the COPEI government faced serious economic problems, mismanagement and corruption accusations, and denunciation of a secret pact worked out with Colombia over its border dispute with that country. Against the backdrop of imminent elections, a tough stance on Guyana could, in such circumstances, serve as the diversion the party needed if its next presidential candidate was to be elected. Secondly, concerns over Cuban influence in Guyana including support in the territorial controversy in 1981, is cited as another important reason. The incumbent Venezuelan government had moved closer to the US position on Cuba and hence was not receptive to interaction between Cuba and Guyana. Thirdly, Guyana increased its efforts at development of Essequibo, including seeking funds to build the hydroelectricity project and issuing concessions for oil and other mineral explorations. Fourthly, the government of Guyana was in a vulnerable position as a result of its economic problems and political mismanagement. Fifthly, the precedent provided by recent Belizean concessions to Guatemala in the longstanding dispute between those two countries.¹³

Each of the aforementioned factors offers a sound thesis to explain the rationale for the Venezuelan's government decision not to renew the Protocol. It is worth us exploring further the Colombian angle since this may have more resonance than that indicated by Braveboy-Wagner. The Colombia-Venezuela dispute centres on the delimitation of waters in the Gulf of Venezuela. During 1980, the two countries' governments, which had been enjoying closer relations, engaged in secret discussions

¹³ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), pp.228-231; and Braveboy-Wagner in Hopkins (1983), pp.229-231.

aimed at delimitation. At the end of the talks, an announcement was made that a draft agreement had been reached.¹⁴ The Venezuelan ambassador to Guyana at the time of the non-renewal of the Protocol, Garavini di Turno, has emphasised that the severe criticism of the Venezuelan foreign minister over action taken on Colombia was a very important factor influencing his government's hard-line action on Guyana:

"...even during my years [as ambassador] you could not understand the position of foreign minister [Jose] Zambrano if you don't remember that it nearly burned his hands politically on the Colombia affair....the reaction against him was so strong that from that moment on, he saved his job just for little; and from that moment on, he became extremely hard on the Guyana side. I would say that [the Colombia issue] was a very important factor in the psychological attitude of the government because the government felt very weak on the situation with Colombia and the hardliners felt they were strong, the press was mobilised and the government felt that the safest way of calming down the situation was on the Guyanese side."¹⁵

Myers' report corroborates and elaborates on Garavini di Turno's story regarding the effect of the revelations on the Venezuelan foreign minister:

"Because of the military's concern with defence of the frontiers, Foreign Minister Jose Zambrano Velasco scheduled a meeting. During his presentation the younger officers reacted with extreme hostility upon being briefed as to the terms of the agreement. Senior officers indicated in private that they would recommend to the Senate that the proposed treaty not be approved. Within several days the civilian left was echoing the military's line that Herrera had made a bad bargain. So emotional and widespread was the opposition that the President instructed his foreign minister not to finalize the draft agreement."¹⁶

A similar point was made in a Caribbean-wide monthly newspaper article at the time:

"The Herrera government was unable to deliver to the people a promised settlement of a border dispute on the Colombian front. It therefore seeks a triumph, if not a victory, on the Guyana front which it can give to the frustrated

¹⁴ Myers (1985), pp.17-18.

¹⁵ Interview with Sadio Garavini di Turno, 28 February 2000. See also Ewell, op.cit., p. 310, for details of the actions of the political group, "Nueva Generación", "Academia de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales" and other domestic Venezuelan groups against the negotiations with Colombia in 1980.

¹⁶ Myers (1985), pp.17-18.

Venezuelans as evidence that as a mature nation, Venezuela has exercised its sovereignty to restore the national honour."¹⁷

Although Myers does not take his argument logically forward to link it with Guyana, Garavini di Turno's argument appears highly plausible as an important factor influencing the Herrera Campíns-Zambrano Velasco action on Guyana. In an interview with Herrera Campíns, he stated that there was no link between what happened with Colombia and his action over Guyana.¹⁸

Whatever the hierarchy of factors influencing the Venezuelan government's decision not to renew the Protocol, its coincidence or not with the move by Caracas to strengthen its military arsenal and with another territorial conflict in the region resulting in war, created a precipitous rise in the sense of alarm in Georgetown. In November 1981, for instance, newspaper reports in Guyana carried stories that the Venezuelan government was reactivating two jungle brigades to strengthen its military presence on the border with Guyana.¹⁹ This was only one month before Venezuela was required to serve notice of its intentions, as required by Article V(3) of the Protocol.²⁰ Let us recall that it was in April 1981 that Caracas signalled unofficially, its decision about the Protocol. In April 1982, two months before the official expiry of the Protocol, there were reports that influential Venezuelans were urging an armed solution to the territorial controversy.²¹ The Venezuelan ambassador in Georgetown was later reported as denying knowledge of a build-up of troops along his country's border with Guyana, but one member of the foreign ministry in Caracas was reported in the same article as confirming

¹⁷ *Caribbean Contact*, March 1982, p.10.

¹⁸ Interview with Luis Herrera Campíns, 8 March 2000.

¹⁹ *Sunday Chronicle*, 29 November 1981, p.1. A similar report filed from the regional news agency, CANA, and Reuters, was carried in Barbados's *Advocate News* of the same date, p.1.

²⁰ See Appendix 6 for the Protocol. The GOV notified its Guyanese counterpart of its formal decision not to renew the Protocol on 11 December 1982, *Guyana Chronicle*, 12 December 1981, p.1.

²¹ See for instance, *Guyana Chronicle*, 17 and 27 April 1981, pp.1 and 12, respectively.

the movement of troops on "internal security initiatives."²² Moreover, the commander of the Venezuelan navy, vice-admiral, Rafael Bertorelli, stated in a press conference, "Venezuela will exhaust all efforts in a search for a peaceful solution to the border dispute but that does not mean it rules out the use of the military road."²³

Other reports tallied the number of Guyanese air space violations by the Venezuelan air force as being eighty-three in 1981 and twenty-five for the following year to April.²⁴ On another level, there were allegations of the Venezuelan government trying to induce Guyanese citizens in the border area, reminiscent of the Kabakaburi Conference incident, discussed in chapter 3.²⁵ The sense of mounting pressure from Venezuela was accompanied by rumblings from Suriname; Guyana's eastern neighbour with which it has border disputes over the source of a Corentyne river, the boundary along parts of that river and an area of overlap in the Atlantic.²⁶ Although Guyana and Suriname's economic and military might are more comparable than Guyana's with Venezuela's, the decision by Paramaribo's military leader, lieutenant colonel D. Bouterse, to voice his anger about incidents relating to the disputed area at this time meant that the government in Guyana was almost in a state of siege.²⁷ The timing of such a stance from Paramaribo was perhaps no coincidence, since as Gill notes, Suriname and Venezuela have often laid on the pressure over their respective territorial claims in tandem.²⁸

²² Ibid., 28 April 1982, p.1.

²³ *Sunday Chronicle*, 18 July 1982, p.1.

²⁴ *Guyana Chronicle*, 29 April 1982, p.1. The Venezuelan ambassador in Georgetown was later reported as conceding that there may have been violations of Guyana's airspace, but argued that they may have been done by small civilian aircraft, *ibid.*, 24 June, 1982, p.12.

²⁵ *Guyana Chronicle*, 6 May 1982, p.1.

²⁶ Pollard in Manigat (1977), pp.217-252, provides an historical analysis of the Guyana-Suriname dispute.

²⁷ See, for instance, *Mirror*, 20 December 1981, p.1, which reports Bouterse's television address in Paramaribo in which he threatened to strike back at Guyana against perceived injustices.

²⁸ Gill (1981), mimeo., p.8.

Compounding the fear in Georgetown was the Venezuelan government's acquisition of sophisticated weaponry at this time which enhanced further its considerable military superiority over Guyana. A Guyanese newspaper detailed the Venezuelan purchase of Italian frigates and F-16 jets from the US. It should be noted, however, another publication argued that the sale of these jets to Venezuela was a direct response by the US government to show its support for Venezuela vis-à-vis Cuba, rather than Guyana:

"The overt sale of the F-16 planes to Venezuela was intended by the USA as a gesture, not to Guyana's regime, but to the government of Cuba, of a readiness of the USA to support Venezuela, uneasy at the thought of a 'third party' taking an interest in the controversy with Guyana."²⁹

This followed Cuba's issuing of a joint communiqué with Guyana in 1981 which suggested Havana's entrance into the controversy in support of Guyana.³⁰

All of the aforementioned factors created a worrying time in Georgetown. More so, when it is considered that the expiration of the Protocol occurred in the wake of the Falklands/Malvinas war. Indeed, Venezuela announced its support for Argentina in that war, while citing its own territorial controversy with Guyana.³¹ The Venezuelan position, as expressed in a foreign ministry presentation to Congress, was as follows: "La posición asumida por el país y por el Gobierno Nacional fue de absoluta solidaridad con la hermana República de Argentina."³² Such a stand was conceived in terms of the anti-colonial framework of Venezuela, as Herrera Campíns explains:

²⁹ *Caribbean Contact*, March 1982, p.10. See Table 1 for further details of Venezuela's acquisition of F-16 fighter jets.

³⁰ See *Catholic Standard*, 27 January 1985, p.4, for a report on Cuba's declarations in support of Guyana.

³¹ Report in *Express*, as reproduced in *Guyana Chronicle*, 5 May 1982, p.8.

³² MRE (1983), Introduction.

"El problema podríamos decir nuestro, no es con Guyana; el problema es con Inglaterra y ya lo vimos cuando el año vino la Guerra Las Malvinas, nosotros dentro la concepción anticolonialista Latinoamericana nos pusimos, al lado de Argentina..."³³

From the perspective of the Venezuelan government, the Falklands/Malvinas is intricately linked with colonialism. It was reported too, "The Argentine military takeover of the Falkland Islands prompted nationalists in Venezuela this week to suggest similar action against Guyana."³⁴ Similar stories were carried in British newspapers on the likelihood of a Venezuelan military invasion of the Essequibo.³⁵ The Guardian, for instance, stated that support for armed invasion increased not just in relation to Argentine action in the Falklands, but also after news of oil discoveries in the Essequibo.³⁶ In April 1982, the Canadian Home Oil Company announced its discovery of oil in the North Rupununi area of Essequibo, following an exploration concession issued by the government of Guyana.³⁷ This would have increased the stakes in Venezuela over Essequibo, not necessarily from a monetary perspective, but in terms of preventing exploitation of what the Venezuelans consider to be their soil.

Despite these signs, Garavini di Turno stresses that while there may have been elements in Venezuelan society favouring an invasion, it was not official government policy. He notes, however, "I am sure there were many in the more radical [civilian and military] in Venezuela, thinking 'oh well, if they did it, we should do the same'. [But

³³ Interview with Luis Herrera Campíns, 10 March 2000.

³⁴ *Trinidad Guardian*, 17 April 1981, p.1. It should be noted that the calls for military invasion were not confined to the 1982 period, but is a recurrent theme amongst certain civilian and military elements in Venezuela. This author interviewed one former Venezuelan army colonel, Pompeyo Torrealba, on 10 March 2000, who was still very much in favour of a military solution.

³⁵ The British newspapers included the *Daily Telegraph* and *Glasgow Herald*, extracts from which were published in *Guyana Chronicle*, 19 May, 1982, p.16.

³⁶ *The Guardian*, 23 April 1982.

³⁷ *Catholic Standard*, 25 April 1982, p.1.

that] was not the government's plan."³⁸ As Venezuelan ambassador to Guyana at the time, Garavini di Turno was amongst those Venezuelan diplomats issuing statements to the press that it was not its government's intention to invade Guyana.³⁹ Myers, whose report acknowledges that the light crude discovered in the Essequibo in April 1982 would be viewed in Caracas as a welcomed bonus to the country's own less marketable heavy crude, has argued that an invasion by Venezuela was unlikely:

"Use of the military option to force Guyana to the bargaining table, especially in light of the positions taken by Great Britain and the United States during the Falklands Islands conflict, was unrealistic. Consequently, with most diplomatic options exhausted, Venezuelan efforts to recover any of the Essequibo remained at an impasse for the remainder of the Herrera government."⁴⁰

As such, the Herrera Campíns administration may have boxed itself into a corner that no longer seemed an attractive one.

The International Approaches of the Government of Guyana

The GOG continued to use international fora and strategic states to counter the actual and perceived threats faced from Caracas during this period of heightened tensions. Two factors, in particular, facilitated an extension of Guyana's internationalising strategies. They include: systemic changes resulting from détente which was conducive to the rise of third world movements and hence widened the international fora which Georgetown could access; and the transformation of CARIFTA into CARICOM, whose treaty provided for foreign policy coordination of member states. Braveboy-Wagner's description of the foreign policy strategies of this period is apt, "...international visibility

³⁸ Interview with Garavini di Turno, 28 February 2000.

³⁹ See for instance, *Trinidad Guardian*, 28 April 1982, p.5; and *Express*, 12 May 1982, p.21.

⁴⁰ Myers (1985), p.16.

as a strategy to win friends and raise the costs to Venezuela of continuing to press its claim..."⁴¹

The year 1981 saw a return to a more direct advocacy by the Burnham government in the UN on the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy after Venezuela signalled its intention not to renew the Protocol. As Jackson stated in a speech of the same year, "Faced as we are today with a serious threat to our territorial integrity and with other external pressures to alter our strategy for economic development, the Party is particularly pre-occupied at this moment with the task of formulating foreign policy." Moreover, Jackson went on to record the significance of the UN as a form of security for countries such as Guyana in all aspects of the problems they face:

"For small states like Guyana, the United Nations is part of our security system, for in it, we can with a mobilised public opinion seek to expose and condemn discriminatory practices and seek to promote programmes and policies designed to benefit the majority of mankind. The United Nations must remain first for the small and weak, a repository of hope working for a world where the harsher excesses of power can be contained, even as we strive for a just and equitable international system".⁴²

This importance attached to the UN by the Burnham government was pertinent when in addition to Jackson, the country's new prime minister, Ptolemy Reid, turned to the General Assembly for international support, in a speech reminiscent of those delivered prior to the Protocol.⁴³ Once again, the General Assembly was used to draw the world community's attention to Venezuelan actions. That is, namely the decision not to renew the Protocol as well as other issues such as the objection to the Upper Mazaruni hydroelectric project and other attempts to stymie economic development of Essequibo

⁴¹ Braveboy-Wagner (1989), p.44.

⁴² Jackson, (1981a), pp. 13-14. See also p.5.

⁴³ Under a change in the constitution in 1980, Burnham became executive president.

under Guyanese sovereignty. Reid also demonstrated the new insecurities of his government in relation to Venezuela, especially in view of the recent acquisition by that state of a sophisticated arsenal:

"...the history of Venezuela's behaviour on the question of the frontier with Guyana gives us little cause of optimism. What causes further concern are other policies being pursued by the present government of Venezuela in this regard. This allied with the desire of that government to acquire new and sophisticated weapons of war, including F16 fighter aircraft, are increasingly clamant calls within Venezuela for a military solution to the controversy."

The Burnham government clearly felt under threat from Venezuela in 1981, no doubt exaggerated by its precarious domestic position, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

During the speech to the UN, the tried and tested technique of widening the context of the threat faced by Guyana to demonstrate its relevance to other states, in a bid to win their support, was used. Reid declared, "The implications of the Venezuelan claim are serious as much for the future relations between Guyana and Venezuela as they are for the future of several states in Latin America and indeed beyond our region in Africa and in Europe." The speech concluded with a call on the UN to persuade Venezuela to abandon its policy on Essequibo:

"We bring it back [the territorial controversy] to this organisation in 1981 to help us maintain our independence and to have our territorial integrity respected...we however now appeal to the organisation and each and every member of it to prevail upon Venezuela to abandon the ill-conceived course of action on which she has for too long embarked."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ptolemy Reid's speech to the 36th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 24 1981, *Guyana Chronicle* 16 October 1981.

Quite unsurprisingly, the Venezuelan government, at whom Guyana's international advocacy in the UN was targeted, reportedly viewed the contents of Reid's speech as a "propagandistic manoeuvre" on the part of the Burnham government.⁴⁵

A year later in 1982 - the year when the Protocol officially expired - the General Assembly was once more the major international arena at which the Burnham government drew international attention to its plight in the territorial controversy. This time, the address was made by the foreign minister, Jackson, who once again drew on the economic and military actions of the Venezuelan government against Guyana. He also gave his government's opinion on Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo. "We are convinced that the Venezuelan territorial claim is an unjustified attempt to satiate a thirst for the land and resources of others." Of particular significance, the General Assembly was used during Jackson's speech to announce to Venezuela the international organizations it deemed suitable for the next stage in negotiations between the two states, as required under the terms of the Geneva Agreement at the end of the Protocol. Those organizations being: the ICJ, the Security Council and the General Assembly.⁴⁶ Given that the Guyanese government was cognizant of Venezuela's preference for bilateral negotiations as the next stage in negotiations, this call before the world community, can only be viewed as a deliberate attempt to embarrass that state into opting for an international mechanism.

⁴⁵ *Sunday Chronicle*, 29 November 1981, p.1, reporting on a document sent by the Venezuelan foreign ministry to the UN secretary-general.

⁴⁶ "Statement by Comrade Rashleigh E. Jackson Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana on Monday 11 October, 1982 at the XXXVIIth Session of the United Nations General Assembly", Jackson (1982), pp.26-34.

During 1982 the GOG was fortunate to have held one of the non-permanent seats on the UN's Security Council. This feat (its second, the first being in 1975/1976) as Ferguson notes, was not a result of sheer coincidence:

"...it was more than fortuitous that Guyana acceded to membership of the UN Security Council on 1 January 1982. This was merely the result of thoughtful diplomatic planning, since the ending of the life of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain in 1982 was one of the main factors in Guyana's earlier decision to stand for membership of the Council."⁴⁷

Being on the Security Council at a time of escalated threats to Guyana's territorial integrity effectively placed the Burnham government in a strong position in that international body at a time when its support was most needed. The Guyanese government, through its permanent representative to the UN, Noel Sinclair, wasted little time in taking advantage of Guyana's strategic positioning on the Security Council. Although, as in earlier times, not opting to call for a Security Council resolution, that body's president, along with the UN secretary-general, were nevertheless notified of developments between Caracas and Georgetown.⁴⁸ Such notifications occurred especially in relation to reports of an imminent invasion of Guyana by Venezuela and reported incursions by Venezuelan military personnel into Guyanese territory.⁴⁹

At another UN forum in 1982, Jackson also expressed his satisfaction at the provisions made in the Law of the Sea Convention, in what was an unambiguous reference to Venezuela and its claims to Essequibo:

⁴⁷ Ferguson (1999), p.382.

⁴⁸ A letter from Guyana's permanent representative to the president of the Security Council and the response from the Venezuelan counterpart, both in 1982, are reprinted in Braveboy-Wagner in Hopkins (1983), pp.341-343. See also, *Guyana Chronicle* 29 April 1982, pp.1, 12; *Trinidad Guardian* 13 May 1982, p.2 and 15 May, p.2; and *Sunday Chronicle*, 16 May 1982, p.1.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, *Trinidad Guardian*, 13 May 1982, p.2, on the PNC administration's complaint to the Security Council about the troop incursions into its territory.

"Yet we must be on guard lest there are attempts to insinuate into bilateral relations under the guise of maritime delimitation, disputes and controversies which owe their inspiration to ambitions rooted in territorial aggrandisement. The Convention elaborates a regime for the peaceful use of the seas. In this sense Guyana notes with keen interest the provisions dealing with the peaceful settlement of disputes through compulsory procedures. Furthermore Guyana is particularly attracted to article 301 under which states 'in exercising their rights and performing their duties under the convention' are enjoined to 'refrain from any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state...'.⁵⁰

Once again, the Burnham government had found parallels to draw on in an international issue.

In 1975, Guyana's former minister of foreign affairs, Shridath Ramphal, became the secretary-general of the Commonwealth. Ferguson has opined, "That elevation was in itself as much a tribute to Ramphal's undeniable diplomatic prowess as to the recognition of the tremendous standing of Guyana in the councils of world diplomacy that he himself had contributed to build."⁵¹ With Ramphal at the helm, Commonwealth support for Guyana was strongly expressed at the 1981 CHOGM, after the Herrera Campíns government in Venezuela had signalled its refusal to renew the Protocol of Port-of-Spain.

"Heads of Government expressed their deep concern at the threat to the territorial integrity of Guyana arising from the resuscitation by Venezuela of a claim to more than two-thirds of the territory of Guyana and the steps taken by Venezuela in pursuit of the claim. Noting that the existing boundary was laid down by an International Arbitral Award in 1899 and accepted by all concerned as a final settlement, they expressed support for Guyana and called for the peaceful settlement of the controversy in accordance with established procedures and with full respect for the sanctity of treaties."⁵²

⁵⁰ "Statement by Comrade Rashleigh E. Jackson...at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea Final Session, Montego Bay, Jamaica...8 December 1982", Jackson (1982), pp.36-38.

⁵¹ Ferguson (1999), p.245.

⁵² "Final Communiqué", CHOGM, Melbourne, 30 September-7 October 1981, Melbourne", Commonwealth Secretariat (1987), p.228.

This extract from the Commonwealth statement points to the fact that the Burnham government had received the unambiguous support of that body's members when it needed that backing in the territorial controversy with Venezuela. It should also be observed that the acquisition of support from this group would also have fed into the United Nations where the Commonwealth represents a bloc. As this newspaper report in 1982 indicates, "Commonwealth Caribbean Ambassadors at the United Nations have asked to be kept fully informed of developments on Venezuela's campaign of aggression against Guyana. And they are ready 'to place their diplomacy at Guyana's disposal'."⁵³ As such, even before approaching the UN, the Burnham government was assured of the Commonwealth's support.

Lewis has argued that the developing world was crucial in the Burnham government's lobbying against the Venezuelan claim:

"An important aspect of Guyana's activities in international forums on this matter concerned its attempt to seek to neutralize any attempt by Venezuela to achieve legitimacy for her claim; particularly among the newly independent Third World States. A major objective, then of Guyana's diplomacy of non-alignment was directed at ensuring firm knowledge of its case among Third World countries in a context of limited previous knowledge of the country and its problems, seeking sympathy for its case and at least then neutrality in the case especially of historical friends of Venezuela"⁵⁴

Searwar writes specifically on the utilization of the NAM in Guyana's bid to win the support of the developing world. "The threats to the territorial integrity of Guyana and Belize evoked, as one major response, the utilization of the Non-Aligned Movement...as a 'security shield' in the context of which could be mobilised the diplomatic support of the

⁵³ *Guyana Graphic*, 21 May 1982, pp.1, 16, based on a briefing given to that newspaper by Guyana's permanent representative to the UN, Noel Sinclair.

⁵⁴ Lewis in Bryan, et al. (1990), pp.285-286.

Afro-Asian states."⁵⁵ Like the United Nations, the NAM, which Guyana joined in 1969, emerged as a crucial international organ through which its government brought pressure to bear on Venezuela.

The NAM's aims include, "to maintain solidarity and give mutual support, particularly in situations threatening the independence and territorial integrity of the Non-Aligned Countries."⁵⁶ It is worth us listing the five principles of the NAM in order to gauge the significance of the Movement to the government of Guyana in its territorial controversy with Venezuela:

"(i) the right of all peoples to freedom, self-determination and independence; (ii) respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states; (iii) the right of all states to equality and active participation in international affairs; (iv) the right of all nations to determine in full freedom the paths of their internal political, economic, social and cultural development; (v) the right of all peoples to the benefits of economic development and the fruits of the scientific and technological revolution; and (vi) the peaceful settlement of disputes with the consequent need to refrain the threat or use of force."⁵⁷

On these bases, the NAM was tailor-made for the GOG to counter Venezuela's claims to Essequibo.

The former foreign minister, Ramphal, has given an insight into the significance of the NAM: "Non-alignment was the natural tendency of Guyana's foreign policy even if we didn't have this issue, but having this issue made it terribly important that we had the alliance of the Non-aligned Movement on our side and we worked very hard at it."⁵⁸ As one former Guyanese diplomat also opines, "Guyana saw non-alignment serving a number of purposes: it was making friends who were very important in terms of its own

⁵⁵ Searwar in *ibid.*, p.17.

⁵⁶ "The Georgetown Declaration" in MEA (1973), pp. 58-60.

⁵⁷ Reprinted in MFA (1984d), pp.16-17.

⁵⁸ Interview with Shridath Ramphal, 23 March 2001.

problems with Venezuela, at least the African support."⁵⁹ In this regard, the support given by Georgetown to African liberation movements was significant in winning the solidarity of states from the same continent to Guyana's territorial problems. An example of the support from one such state is that received from Zambia which was also prominent in the NAM. As one Guyanese newspaper reported during this period of renewed tensions between Guyana and Venezuela in 1982, "The Zambian President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda has come out firmly on the side of Guyana in the territorial issue."⁶⁰ Irrespective of the motivating factors behind the Burnham government's advocacy for African liberation struggles, there emerged linkages in terms of the backing the government received from African states for its territorial controversy. The support given to such movements may be viewed from one perspective as Guyana's adventurism on the international stage in order to gain the legitimacy it lacked at home. At the same time, it served as an important corollary to the general policy of seeking international backing for Guyana's territorial integrity.

Danns is critical of the Guyanese government's policy of non-alignment. It is worth us examining his arguments in full:

"The government's pursuit of a policy of nonalignment, of being in neither East nor West blocs may be important for a sense of national integrity for a small, underdeveloped nation-state, but it may also be at variance with the realities of international power politics and can be viewed as either conceit or courage on the part of the regime and its leadership. What is clear is that Guyana's nonalignment puts it in the inevitable position of having no dependable friends and several reliable enemies."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Interview with Peter Denny, 9 May 2000.

⁶⁰ *Guyana Chronicle*, 31 March 1982, p.1. See also Jackson (1979).

⁶¹ Danns in Young and Phillips (1986), pp.125-126.

It may be argued that as an international organ the NAM represented an important source of advocacy for Guyana on its own and in terms of its linkages in other international organizations, namely the UN. The NAM actually institutionalised coordinated activities amongst its members, as this extract from Jaipal notes:

"According to a decision of the Algiers Summit, there was to be a Bureau to prepare for the next summit and for meetings of Foreign Ministers in between to coordinate the policies and actions of members at the UN, to oversee the implementation of decisions etc. This came to be known as the Coordinating Bureau which met as and when necessary at Ministers' level, and met more often at New York at the level of Ambassadors to discuss issues before the UN or any crisis that may arise."⁶²

Conceded that in an era of bloc politics and with superpowers able to entice small states into their respective folds, the policy of non-alignment, especially in weak countries, represented more of an ideal rather than an achievable reality. Given the military and economic standing of the majority of NAM members, they were unlikely also to provide an effective combatant force in the event of a Venezuelan invasion of Essequibo. These factors, while valid, ignore the significance of the NAM as a lobbying force in the key multilateral institution, the UN. It also fails to take into account the impact of such pressure on the Venezuelan government which regarded itself as a champion of third world causes and as such, desired NAM membership. Let us explore how the GOG used the NAM as part of its international approach to the Guyana-Venezuela controversy in order to gauge my arguments further.

The importance of the Coordinating Bureau becomes apparent when one considers the following argument proffered by Rajan. "Nonaligned conferences...have consistently upheld the primacy of the United Nations as the most representative forum

⁶² Jaipal (1987), p.105.

and effective instrument for the conduct of international relations within the community of nations."⁶³ Securing the support of NAM members would have been of significant benefit to the GOG in terms of the minimum support it could receive in the wider UN. The PNC government's active role in the Coordinating Bureau of the NAM, as well as Burnham's attendance at NAM Summits, would clearly have placed Guyana in an advantageous position vis-à-vis Venezuela in that organization.⁶⁴ This is especially when it is considered that Venezuela was not even a full member, but only had observer status.

The NAM's oft-repeated declarations on the principles of respect for territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes would have been interpreted by the GOG as implicit support for its approach in the territorial controversy with Venezuela. It was not, however, until 1982 - just prior to the formal expiration of the Protocol - that a communiqué of the Coordinating Bureau pointed to an expressed solidarity with Guyana:

"Having heard the statement of the Foreign Minister of Guyana, the Ministers expressed concern over certain developments in respect of Venezuela's territorial claim against Guyana which have caused deep apprehensions in Guyana, a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries...They reaffirmed that use or threat of use of force in the settlement of disputes is inadmissible; that the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of countries should be respected, that no State should try to interfere or intervene in the internal affairs of other States and that all differences or claims which may exist between States should be settled by peaceful means in order that peaceful relations should prevail among States...They called for a peaceful and just solution to the controversy on the basis of the above-mentioned principles and in strict conformity with the Geneva Agreement of 1966."⁶⁵

⁶³ Rajan in Rajan et al. (1987), p.305.

⁶⁴ See for instance, Jackson's addresses to the Coordinating Bureau of the NAM in New York and Managua in Jackson (1983), pp.76-79, and (1983), pp.5-12, respectively.

⁶⁵ Communiqué of the "Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries", Havana, May 31-June 5, 1982, NAM (1983), pp.557-587.

There could not have been a more clear-cut declaration of support for Guyana than this one. It should be noted that an earlier NAM foreign ministers' meeting in September 1981 would have presented the first opportunity to lobby for support in the wake of Burnham's visit to Caracas in April of the same year, when it was disclosed that the Venezuelan government did not intend to renew the Protocol. The timing of that foreign ministers' meeting, which was held in New York, occurred just prior to Guyana's renewed campaign in the General Assembly. This would suggest that the Burnham government had not been effective enough within the NAM to ensure reference to the territorial controversy in the communiqué of the foreign ministers' meeting.⁶⁶ One year later in October 1982, the result of the government of Guyana's lobbying at the NAM foreign ministers' meeting was evident:

"Noting that the Protocol of Port of Spain had expired in June 1982, the [NAM] Meeting called for a just and peaceful solution to the controversy relating to Venezuela's territorial claim against Guyana on the basis of the principles set out in paragraphs 134 and 135 of the communiqué of the Havana Meeting, in particular the inadmissibility of the use of force in the settlement of disputes, and in accordance with the Geneva Agreement of 1966."⁶⁷

Ironically, it should be observed, this was also a time when that organization was voicing its support for The Argentine in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict, counter to Guyana's position of supporting Britain.⁶⁸ The Burnham government scored another significant coup in relation to the Herrera Campíns government at the 1982 meeting of the Coordinating Bureau. During this gathering, the Venezuelan government submitted an

⁶⁶ "Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegations of Non-Aligned Countries", New York, September 25 and 28, 1981, *ibid.*, pp.541-549. This factor was not observed by Ferguson (1999), pp.385-388, who details Guyana's lobbying of the NAM in this period.

⁶⁷ "Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegations of Non-Aligned Countries", New York, October 4-9, 1982, NAM (1983), pp.595-608.

⁶⁸ It should be noted that according to Garavini di Turno (1988), p.136, the Burnham government had previously voiced its support for The Argentine in a 1975 NAM declaration.

application for formal membership of the NAM. Guyanese foreign minister, Jackson's response was to express his concerns about Venezuela's application not just in relation to the territorial controversy but, skilfully, he also drew reference to that state's counter position on other NAM issues, such as the recent UN resolution - Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Affairs of States.⁶⁹ Moreover, as Ferguson notes of the Burnham's government tactical diplomacy on this issue:

"What in essence Guyana did at the time was not to oppose outright Venezuela's membership. Rather, more astutely, it forced it to have to publicly address its disposition with regard to such principles as the non-use of force in international behaviour."⁷⁰

His government had also used the opportunity of Venezuela's membership application to get that country to cancel its objections to the Upper Mazaruni hydroelectric project.⁷¹ The GOG's tactics were successful, resulting in Venezuela's withdrawal of its application for membership on 14 February 1983, just prior to the 1983 summit of the NAM.⁷² This was evidently a tactical move to stave off further embarrassment, as the *Trinidad Guardian* opined:

"The Venezuelan withdrawal is seen as a move to avoid further humiliation at next month's summit of the non-aligned movement in India. Cancellation of the Venezuelan application represents a defeat for the Caracas Government of President Luis Herrera Campíns, which had hoped to use the Delhi Summit to mobilise further support for its Essequibo claim."⁷³

⁶⁹ See "Statement by...Rashleigh E. Jackson Minister of Foreign Affairs on Venezuela's Application for Full Membership of the Non-Aligned Movement...October 8 1982, New York", Jackson (1982), pp.23-25.

⁷⁰ Ferguson (1999), p.385.

⁷¹ MFA (1982), p.27.

⁷² Ibid.,(1983), p.29.

⁷³ *Trinidad Guardian*, 17 February 1983, p.13.

As would be expected, this climb down by Venezuela was viewed as a triumph for the GOG. One Caribbean-wide newspaper noted:

"Although the Caracas Administration of President Luis Herrera Campíns said that it had postponed, for a later date, its application in an effort to preserve unity among Latin American and Caribbean countries with which 'we have excellent relations' the Venezuelan move is viewed in Georgetown as a diplomatic triumph for the Government of President Forbes Burnham."⁷⁴

It is important to observe that what appears as merely the Venezuelan government's attempt to explain away the suspension of its application, was an indication of the inroads Caracas was making amongst states with which Guyana has had traditionally close relations. Indeed, Garavini di Turno has argued that the outcome at the 1983 conference of NAM foreign ministers in Havana was the result of the principle of consensus within the NAM, rather than an outright support for Guyana's position on Venezuela:

"La tradicional regla del consenso, en el NOAL, convertía la decidida negativa de Guyana en un virtual veto...el ejercicio del veto le costó a Guyana un significativo desgaste de su capital político en el NOAL, ya que fue utilizado en contra de la opinión de la abrumadora mayoría del Movimiento, incluyendo sus miembros más influyentes, e.g. Yugoslavia, India y Cuba. Para algunos observadores, hubiera sido más favorable a los intereses guyaneses, en terminos de la ecuación costo-beneficio, haber dado la bienvenida a Venezuela en el NOAL y después haber aprovechado su influencia en el Movimiento para presionarla."⁷⁵

Such an argument suggests that what may appear to be a victory for the Burnham government was not as clear-cut when the underlying story is examined.

The appearance, at least, of continued support for Guyana within the NAM was demonstrated once again at the 1983 Summit in New Delhi. The meeting, which noted the government of Guyana's attempts to preserve its territorial integrity, called for a

⁷⁴ *Caribbean Contact*, March 1983, p.7.

⁷⁵ Garavini di Turno (1988), p.137.

peaceful settlement in accordance with NAM principles and the Geneva Agreement.⁷⁶ Ferguson has argued about the important role of the interplay of personalities, namely that of Burnham and Gandhi, in securing such support from the NAM.⁷⁷ This argument conflicts that of Garavini di Turno who, as noted earlier, suggested that Guyana's lobbying against Venezuelan membership was counter to the preference of NAM states, such as India.

Earlier developments within CARIFTA led to the creation of certain institutional mechanisms which could be utilized by the Burnham government in its bid to ensure the continued support of the English-speaking Caribbean against Venezuela's claims to Essequibo. Firstly, CARIFTA's Seventh Conference of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries meeting in Trinidad in October 1972 had decided to establish a Standing Committee of Foreign Ministers (SCMFA).⁷⁸ Secondly, the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which facilitated the converting of CARIFTA into CARICOM, made explicit provisions for foreign policy coordination amongst member states through the SCMFA. Article 17 of the treaty of Chaguaramas declares:

"1. To the end that Member States aim at the fullest possible coordination of their foreign policies within their respective competences and seek to adopt as far as possible common positions in major international issues, there is hereby established a Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs."⁷⁹

That article institutionalised foreign policy coordination within CARICOM through the SCMFA.

⁷⁶ "Extract 2: Political Declaration - 7th Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, New Delhi - March 7 to 11, 1983", Appendix 2, Burnham (1983).

⁷⁷ Ferguson (1999), p.386.

⁷⁸ Searwar in *The CARICOM Bulletin* (1983), p.30.

⁷⁹ CARICOM (1973), p.23.

It should be noted that while the English-speaking Caribbean countries have scored some successes in foreign policy coordination over the years, there has been some criticisms levelled at that coordination. The areas of successes have included the joint decision by the four independent countries at the time - Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago - to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba, even against the background of objections from the USA.⁸⁰ Unity amongst Caribbean states was also instrumental in bringing about the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries' unity and negotiations that ultimately led to the Lomé Convention in 1975.⁸¹ Despite such achievements, Payne has levelled criticisms at the foreign policy coordination aspect of CARICOM. As early as 1980, he noted, "...a consensus of opinion is now emerging in the region that the area of foreign policy co-ordination is one of the Caribbean Community's main weaknesses."⁸² Griffith has argued that differences in politics, ideology and national interests affected coordination.⁸³ Moreover, as Braveboy-Wagner has contended, CARICOM "...are not in any way bound as a group to a common position."⁸⁴ That this is the case is implicit in the Treaty of Chaguaramas under which foreign policy coordination is an aim, rather than mandatory. Criticisms have also been levelled against CARICOM and its predecessor, CARIFTA, for not having conflict resolution, military or security mechanisms.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ramphal (1985), p.14 and Payne (1980), p.211. Gill in Manigat (1977b), pp.365-368, notes that the Burnham government had taken the lead in respect of this decision.

⁸¹ Ramphal (1975b) and Dyett (1989).

⁸² Payne (1980), p.222. See also Payne (1984), p.139 in which he notes that the SCMFA met only four times in the first six years (1973-1979) of its existence.

⁸³ Griffith in Braveboy-Wagner (1993), p.113.

⁸⁴ Braveboy-Wagner (1989), p.148.

⁸⁵ Ibid.; Collart in Preiswerk (1969), pp.170-188; and Danns in Young and Philipps (1986).

In spite of its drawbacks, CARICOM, continued to be regarded as a major source of support for Guyana in the territorial controversy with Venezuela. As Searwar has contended, "In the case of Guyana, co-ordinated foreign policy action has...provided an important security resource in the controversy which has developed as a result of the Venezuelan claim."⁸⁶ That support had extra-regional significance since, like the NAM, CARICOM members also attempted to coordinate their foreign policy in New York at the annual General Assembly sessions.⁸⁷ This is not to say, however, that that support was automatic or always forthcoming. We turn our attention now to the successes and difficulties the Burnham government encountered in its strategy of mobilising Caribbean support. In doing so, I will consider two aspects - the extent to which CARICOM was mobilised and that body's advocacy on behalf of Guyana.

It should be noted when considering the GOG's lobbying of CARICOM that the regional body, which was officially formed on 1 May 1974, had encountered a period of stagnation between 1976 and 1981 when no Heads of Government Meetings took place.⁸⁸ The Meetings of the SCMFA fared slightly better, as mentioned earlier, with four gatherings within the first six years of CARICOM. Luckily for the Burnham government, this stagnation within the movement took place at a time of relatively good relations between Caracas and Georgetown.

The signal from Herrera Campíns in April 1981 that his government would not be renewing the Protocol of Port-of-Spain resulted in the PNC government going into

⁸⁶ Searwar in *The CARICOM Bulletin* (1983), p.32.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.33. See also news release 9/1980, "CARICOM Overseas Missions to Foster Closer Co-operation following Foreign Ministers Meeting in Saint Lucia", Caribbean Community Secretariat, 15 February 1980.

⁸⁸ See Boodhoo (1986), p.105, who has argued that Eric Williams "...was largely responsible..." no meetings being convened during that time, for more details.

overdrive to target CARICOM member states for support. The diplomatic operation launched in this regard has been described by the foreign ministry in Georgetown as follows:

"In response to Venezuelan pressure over the Guyana/Venezuelan controversy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a highly successful diplomatic initiative to win support from Caricom countries. A high-powered diplomatic mission headed by High Commissioner Sahadeo personally met and explained to each Head of Government the history and ramifications of Venezuela's expansionist and colonialist plans not only for Guyana but for the Caribbean as a whole."⁸⁹

This lobbying was successful in its desired effect, as demonstrated by the publicly declared and unequivocal support received from the SCMFA meeting, which stated:

"Reaffirming the support for the territorial integrity of Guyana, the Ministers noted that the action of the Government of Venezuela against that CARICOM Member State did not accord with the fundamental principles governing international relations as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, the sovereign equality of States, respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of States, and the peaceful settlement of all international issues. The Ministers called upon the Government of Venezuela to settle this matter by peaceful means. The Foreign Ministers declared that CARICOM States cannot accept that any State has the right to take action to frustrate the economic development of any other State. They expressed full support for Guyana's efforts to develop hydro-power in the Upper Mazaruni as an alternative energy system and agreed to give every moral and political support to this end."⁹⁰

While the Burnham government's lobbying of CARICOM reaped great dividends in 1981, the following year a different scenario emerged. This is despite evidence of that government's continued lobbying of Caribbean states. The MFA stated, "The Caribbean countries remain Guyana's closest associates in her international relations and the focus

⁸⁹ MFA (1981a), p.22.

⁹⁰ News Release 46/1981, "Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers of CARICOM Responsible for Foreign Affairs", Caribbean Community Secretariat, 3 July 1981.

of much diplomatic attention."⁹¹ To the contrary, the 1982 statement made by the Heads of Government Meeting indicates that support from CARICOM was not as emphatically stated, as at the 1981 foreign ministers' meeting:

"Recalling its concern for the sanctity of treaties and for defined and demarcated boundaries, the Conference noted the grave effect that this controversy is having on the relations between CARICOM States and Venezuela and took note of the unqualified undertaking given by the Venezuelan Government to eschew the use of force as a means of settling the controversy. The Conference also called upon Venezuela to desist from further action or threats of action likely to affect the economic development of Guyana. The Conference urged Guyana and Venezuela to continue their pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the controversy in accordance with the terms of the Geneva Agreement of 1966 so as to arrive at a final decision as promptly as possible."⁹²

When taken as a whole, the 1982 CARICOM heads' declaration appears to proffer broad support for Guyana in the territorial controversy. A more careful examination - particularly of the latter half of the first sentence - indicates a shift from the concern for the effect on Guyana, *per se*, to that of the relationship between CARICOM states and Venezuela. Nevertheless, the Burnham government was quick to interpret the contents of this CARICOM heads' statement as unwavering support for Guyana:

"Meanwhile, she [Venezuela] seeks friends within Caricom by offering financial and economic assistance. This tactic however, was recognised for what it was, when at the recent Caricom Summit in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, there was full support for the present geographic configuration of Guyana, and Venezuela was warned that her continued claim and acts of economic aggression could jeopardise her relations with other Caricom states. This was a stern rebuff to those who have taken on the mantle of the Spanish conquistadors of yesteryear."⁹³

⁹¹ MFA (1982), p. 31. The same report (p.2.) also lists the other Caribbean heads of states who either visited Burnham or whom were visited by him. See also a report in the *Guyana Chronicle* of 21 May 1982, pp.1, 16, which points to the lobbying of Caribbean states conducted by Guyana's permanent mission at the UN in New York.

⁹² News release no.52/1981 mimeo. "Communiqué", (Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 15-18 November 1982), Caribbean Community Secretariat, 22 November 1982.

⁹³ Burnham (1982), pp.10-11.

The Guyanese leader had, at best, offered a spin-doctored interpretation. Ferguson also took up the same line of reasoning as the Burnham government, without questioning the facts, when he stated that at the Ocho Rios Summit, "...Venezuela found itself coming in for strong criticism as a result of its recent actions against Guyana."⁹⁴ Even allowing for generous interpretation, however, the regional leaders' statement suggests a compromise within the CARICOM, reconciling its historical support for Guyana with the relatively recent developed friendship with Venezuela. The Guyanese foreign minister, Rashleigh Jackson, has admitted that the wording of the communiqué was the result of "a compromise" between Burnham and his Jamaican counterpart, Edward Seaga. The latter is said to have been the only CARICOM leader that was "lukewarm in his support of Guyana", at the a time when the Jamaican government was developing bilateral relations with Venezuela.⁹⁵ This is a tacit admission that in 1982 there was not as strong a CARICOM condemnation of Venezuela as witnessed the previous year.

Not surprisingly, the Venezuelan government welcomed the stand taken by the CARICOM heads in 1982. Quoting Venezuela's Information minister, Guido Díaz Pen, one newspaper reported:

"Guyana's efforts to get its regional partners to issue a strong condemnation of Venezuela at the three-day meeting failed. The Caricom meeting constituted a demonstration that Venezuela has drawn close to Caribbean countries. Not that it is now trying to draw close, but that there was a closeness that has been developing in recent years'."⁹⁶

Moreover, the Venezuelan foreign minister at the time, Zambrano Velasco, was quick to interpret the heads' declaration as being the result of Venezuela's Caribbean policy. He

⁹⁴ Ferguson (1999), p.388.

⁹⁵ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 11 April 2002.

⁹⁶ *Express*, 28 November 1981, p18. See also Ely (1997) mimeo., p.41.

states, "Nuestra política de acercamiento a los países del Caribe ha neutralizado en alguna medida la natural solidaridad con que las circunstancias de una común tradición, lengua y origen, tienen a manifestarse como expresion de vínculos entre los pueblos."⁹⁷ The hyperbole of this speech aside, it has to be recognized that the 1982 CARICOM statement amounted to a significant coup for Venezuela, given the Commonwealth Caribbean's historical support for Guyana in the territorial controversy.

Garavini di Turno notes that Guyana had actually been forced to back-track on its invitation to have the 1982 Heads of Government Meeting hosted in Georgetown after a lukewarm response to its diplomatic lobbying on this front:

"...una intensa movilización de la diplomacia Guyanese para lograr que esa importante 'cumbre' [of CARICOM] se realizara en Guyana. En un primer momento, apareció que el objetivo guyanés había sido logrado, se conoció parcialmente hasta el programa oficial de la conferencia cuya apertura estaba prevista para la primera semana de Julio de 1982, en Georgetown. Según los planes del gobierno guyanés, la reunion se habría transformado en un gran acto de solidaridad para Guyana, en su enfrentamiento con Venezuela. Como un significativo símbolo de solidaridad y apoyo, una de las reuniones importantes de la conferencia habría tendio como sede, una localidad de la Guayana Esequiba. Finalmente, Guyana no logró obtener la sede de la conferencia, en buena parte y entre otras cosas, porque líderes como Adams, Seaga, Compton y Charles no querían transformar la reunión en una manifestación de propaganda antivenezolana."⁹⁸

There were ideological differences between Burnham and some of his Caribbean

⁹⁷ "Discurso pronunciado por el doctor Jose Alberto Zambrano Velasco...en La Convención de Gobernadores (Region Guayana)", MRE (1983), p.883.

⁹⁸ Garavini di Turno (1988), p.138.

counterparts, such as Eugenia Charles.⁹⁹ The pro-US hardliners were clearly responding negatively to the Burnham era socialist ideology. It should also be recognized that this government had lost prestige in the region as a result of, *inter alia*, its human rights abuses, rigging of elections, militarization and falling standards of living in Guyana.

It is unlikely that Guyana encountered difficulties in having the meeting hosted in Georgetown as a result of Venezuelan influence amongst CARICOM countries as the extract from the Libro Amarillo cited suggests or as is argued by Garavini di Turno.¹⁰⁰ Granted that Venezuela, beginning with the Caldera government and especially during the Andrés Pérez administration had embarked on a Caribbean policy geared towards winning influence in the region. Such a policy was accompanied by generous aid and donations to CARICOM governments, made possible by Venezuela's growing wealth resulting from the petro-dollars acquired as a result of OPEC action in the 1970s.¹⁰¹ So widespread was Venezuela's encroachment amongst CARICOM states in the 1970s that the country was subjected to a series of verbal attacks in 1975 by Trinidad and Tobago's prime minister Eric Williams, who charged the country's leadership with a new form of imperialism.¹⁰² Payne has argued that Venezuelan largesse to Caribbean states and the human rights record under Burnham were the two factors influencing the 1982

⁹⁹ See News Release 8/1980 "CARICOM Ministers Review Regional and International Issues at Saint Lucia Meeting", Caribbean Community Secretariat, 11 February 1980, on the need for recognition of ideological plurality within CARICOM. See also Livingston (1990).

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Garavini di Turno, 28 February 2000. See also Garavini di Turno (1988), pp.139-140.

¹⁰¹ See for instance, MRE (1980), on various high-level visits of CARICOM governments to Caracas in search of aid. See also Boersner in Manigat (1976), pp.435-464; Burggraaf in Millett and Will (1979), pp.193-203; and Payne (1984), especially pp.113-136. *Caribbean Contact*, September 1981, p.14, details Venezuela's extensive investments in St Lucia alone.

¹⁰² See Williams' speech to his PNM party conferences, "The Threat to the Caribbean Community", 15 June 1975", Sutton (1981), pp.352-360.

declaration.¹⁰³ I would contend that the ideological differences between Burnham and other CARICOM leaders, which were to become even more pronounced after Grenada, were of more significance than Venezuela's economic generosity, though this would have been a contributory factor. Indeed, the PNC administration was aware of Venezuela's growing influence among its traditional supporters in the Caribbean and sought to caution them against compromising their principles on issues such as territorial integrity in 1981.¹⁰⁴

CARICOM's advocacy pressurized the OAS into rethinking the issue of Guyana and Belize's exclusion based on the 1964 Act of Washington, which was incorporated as Article 8 of the OAS charter.¹⁰⁵ This can be evidenced by the following decision:

"The Juridical and Political Committee of the Organisation of American States...tonight agreed to appoint a Working Group to study Article Eight of the Organisation's Charter which bars countries with territorial disputes against member states from joining the Organisation. The decision came following a 90-minute debate by the Committee on a resolution proposed by the eight English-speaking members of the 29-nation Organisation during the 11th General Assembly of the OAS in session here."¹⁰⁶

The English-speaking Caribbean group continued to pressurize the OAS for the appropriate change to its charter.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that CARICOM members were able to separate their problems with the Burnham government from that of a principle they believed in: universal membership of the OAS. Lobbying on the issue was to eventually prove successful, as will be discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁰³ Payne (1984), pp.149-150.

¹⁰⁴ Jackson (1981b), pp.28-33. Caribbean delegations were present for this speech.

¹⁰⁵ See, for instance, *Caribbean Contact*, January 1981, p.12.

¹⁰⁶ *Caribbean Contact*, January 1982, p.11.

¹⁰⁷ "Communiqué", *Perspective Supplement: Fifth Meeting of Heads of the Caribbean Community*, Conference: Nassau, Bahamas, 4-7 July 1984.

The GOG's relationship with Brazil took on an enhanced mode at this time of heightened tensions between Georgetown and Caracas. Garavini di Turno has suggested signs of the Guyanese government seeking military cooperation with Brazil in 1981, i.e. around the time that the Venezuelan government gave informal notice of its unwillingness to renew the Protocol. "...el Jefe del Estado Mayor de las Fuerzas Armadas guyanesas, Brigadier Norman McLean viajó, en visita oficial a Brasil, donde manifesto su interés en adquirir aviones de reconocimiento, camiones y otros equipos militares."¹⁰⁸ Further evidence of this allegation was reported in a Guyanese newspaper at the time sighting an interview given by Burnham to the BBC's Latin American service. He is reported to have said that purchases would be made of reconnaissance and armoured aircraft during his visit to Brazil in 1982. The newspaper added further that Burnham's statement "...supported other reliable reports that a (US)\$10 million line of credit from Brazil..." was to be used for the purchase of Brazilian-made Embraer aircraft.¹⁰⁹ Such was the extensive development in Guyana-Brazil relations during this period that Caracas became concerned. As the *Trinidad Guardian* reported in April 1981, "Caracas Press reports published here last week said a senior Venezuelan diplomat had warned that increased co-operation between Guyana and Brazil could seriously harm Venezuelan-Brazilian relations."¹¹⁰ If those reports reflected the views expressed in the Miraflores palace, then from the perspective of the Burnham government, its foreign policy strategy of courting relations with Brazil to counter Venezuelan claims to its territory, had the desired effect in Caracas.

¹⁰⁸ Garavini di Turno (1988), p.135.

¹⁰⁹ *The Catholic Standard*, 10 October 1982, p.4.

¹¹⁰ *Trinidad Guardian*, 22 April 1981, p.5.

Any fears harboured by the Venezuelan government about its two neighbours' relations would have been increased in 1982 - the year of the official expiry of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain - since this year witnessed the strengthening of ties between Brasilia and Georgetown. That year started off with the visit of the Brazilian foreign minister to Guyana, Saraiva Guerreiro from 27-29 January 1982.¹¹¹ This was evidently part of the Burnham government's calculated strategy of demonstrating to Caracas its close ties with Brazil.¹¹² Once again, various cooperative agreements of the types described earlier were signed. The visit from Itamaraty, was followed by that of Guyana's Minister of Energy to Brazil in June, where the discussions centred on cooperation in alternative sources of energy.¹¹³

Indicative of the extent of the Guyanese government's bid to have its more powerful neighbour as an ally - was Burnham's visit to Brazil from 30 September to 5 October 1982. The timing of this trip was crucial, coming as it did three months after the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement had expired. Indeed, the Guyanese foreign ministry has described it as: "The visit was the culmination of long and patient work to develop strong and friendly relations between Guyana and Brazil, and to promote Guyana among the Latin American family of nations."¹¹⁴ This was clearly a calculated move designed to demonstrate Brazil's support, as Kirton has observed.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ MFA (1982), pp.117-119.

¹¹² See "Statement by...Rashleigh E. Jackson...at the Commencement of Discussions with...Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro, Minister of External Relations of Brazil...27 January, 1982 in Jackson (1981), pp.5-7, where Jackson refers to Brazil's observance of the principles of the UN charter and the pursuit of a good neighbour policy.

¹¹³ MFA (1982), pp.117-119.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp.117-119.

¹¹⁵ Kirton in Jeffrey and Menke (1991), p.19.

Apart from the usual trade and other forms of cooperation agreements signed, two factors were of significance in relation to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy during Burnham's visit. Firstly, he briefed the Brazilian president, Joao Baptista Figueiredo, on the Venezuelan claim, securing the previously strong Brazilian statement about, *inter alia*, the sanctity of treaties.¹¹⁶ It is interesting to observe that the Brazilian government supported The Argentine's claim to the Falklands/Malvinas islands, but it was neutral on that country's use of force. As such, "The [Guyanese] Embassy [in Brasilia] was at pains to sensitize the Brazilian government to the implications which this conflict in the South Atlantic had for the Guyana/Venezuela controversy."¹¹⁷ The second issue of significance during Burnham's visit is the discussions surrounding his government's purchase of reconnaissance planes and personnel carriers, clearly in response to perceived threats from Venezuela's position on the controversy in 1982.¹¹⁸ Other cases of Brasilia's military cooperation with Guyana in the same year included the former's extension of a line of credit of \$17 million to the latter for military purchases and the continuation of a training programme for GDF officers at the Brazilian Military

¹¹⁶ See *Caribbean Contact*, November 1982, p.6.

¹¹⁷ MFA (1982), p.21.

¹¹⁸ *Caribbean Contact*, November 1982, p.6.

Academy.¹¹⁹ These military forms of cooperation suggest that for the Burnham government, its relationship with Brasilia went beyond receipt of a symbolic demonstration of support.

It is evident that as relations with Caracas deteriorated, the government of Guyana strengthened its ties with Brasilia. This points, once again, to Brazil's strategic significance to Guyana in its controversy with Venezuela. Programmes of cooperation in a number of fields, including trade, health, training, transportation and technical expertise were later devised and implemented in 1981. Official visits also took place between Brazil and Guyana in the same year in order to follow up cooperation agreements. These included that of the Guyanese minister of health, and a team led by the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Trade to Brazil, while the governor of Roraima state which borders Guyana, made an official visit to Georgetown, shortly after Burnham's ill-fated trip to Caracas in April 1981.¹²⁰ Amongst the areas of cooperation agreed on, were the following: construction of a bridge between Guyana and Brazil on the Takutu border river; the establishment of free port facilities for Brazil in Georgetown and the construction of a road from the Guyanese town of Lethem.¹²¹ The latter is particularly significant not just in terms of the renewed vigour in Guyana-Brazil relations, but also as the area of Lethem - a part of the Rupununi where the 1969 rebellion took place - is located in Essequibo. The Brazilian government, whether through calculated strategy or fortuitous action was sending out a message to the government of Venezuela about its

¹¹⁹ Braveboy-Wagner (1989), p.39; and MFA (1982), p.23.

¹²⁰ MFA (1981a), pp.15-16.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp.37-38.

willingness to be involved in the development of that county under Guyanese sovereignty.

Colombia emerged during the Burnham years as a country of new diplomatic strategic significance in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy. The importance of this state to Guyana stems from the border problem that it also has with Venezuela. Colombia's border dispute with Venezuela centres on the oil-rich Gulf of Venezuela, as was discussed earlier. Although as early as January 1971 the governments in Bogotá and Georgetown had confirmed that they would be establishing diplomatic relations with each other, it was not until the period surrounding Venezuela's decision not to renew the Protocol that evidence exists of the Burnham government actively courting the friendship of Bogotá.¹²² Given that the same period was also a trying time in Colombia-Venezuela relations after the secret negotiations between the two states had resulted in a public outcry in the latter, the time was ripe for the development of a mutually supportive relationship between Colombia and Guyana in relation to Caracas.

Guyana's foreign minister at the time, Jackson, has argued that both governments in Bogotá and Georgetown were influenced by their border problems with Venezuela to form closer ties. "I think [the territorial controversy] definitely influenced us...I think Colombia was influenced [by its territorial dispute] in having relations with us too." Jackson further recalls the impact that the relations between the two countries had in Caracas.

"When I went to Colombia, for instance, you find that Zambrano [Venezuela's foreign minister] was saying, 'what is he going to Colombia for?' The fact is that

¹²² Airgram A-3 to State Department, 5 January 1971, Pol 32-1 Guyana-Venezuela, op.cit.

Venezuela got worried that we were getting close to Colombia and that was to our advantage because it meant they had another thorn in their flesh."¹²³

The Venezuelan reaction is understandable given that the unison between eastern and western neighbours on the international stage could portray the government in Caracas negatively on the issue of territorial aggrandisement.

Significantly, the relationship that the Burnham government courted with its counterpart in Colombia was envisaged as a counter-balance to that developed between Venezuela and Suriname - the latter also having a border dispute with Guyana. As Jackson has explained:

"In our analysis, when you look at the operation of Venezuela and Suriname, they always seem to be emphasising their claims at the same time. They synchronise it, but even if they don't synchronise it, once one does it, the other [follows]. But usually, Venezuela does it first then you would begin to expect to see what Suriname would do. So we then developed a counter strategy of...developing towards such a relationship with Colombia."¹²⁴

Evidence of the Burnham government specifically targeting a relationship with Colombia was referred to in a party speech made by Jackson in 1981 during which he declared, "At the bilateral level within the region, Guyana has sought more recently to develop and strengthen our links with Colombia...."¹²⁵ From 2-3 June of the same year, the Guyanese foreign minister, headed a delegation visiting Colombia. Bogotá's foreign minister, Carlos Lemos Simmonds, later made an official ministerial visit to Georgetown from 19-20 August 1981. That visit had represented the first official one from Colombia to Guyana.

¹²³ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 11 April 2000.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 9 December 1999.

¹²⁵ Jackson (1981a), p.20. Gill (1981) mimeo., also looks at Venezuela-Suriname coordination in relation to Guyana.

Jackson used the opportunity of his speech welcoming the Colombian foreign minister to launch what was clearly an attack on Venezuela:

"There is revolving in the region a situation where notwithstanding the universally accepted principles governing international relations to which they purport to subscribe, certain states seem bent on adopting policies of political coercion and of economic aggression against others."

He lauded the Colombia government for its "...principles and correct position..." at the World Bank when another state tried to block the development of another; an unambiguous reference to the Venezuelan government's position on Guyana's hydroelectric project. Pointing to a unity of interest between Bogotá and Georgetown, Jackson noted, "...I believe that we are united in our determination to promote the interests and rights of our peoples and that we shall do so in accordance with time honoured and universal principles including those of sovereignty and mutual benefit."¹²⁶ Agreements were also signed to strengthen economic, scientific, cultural and Amazonian cooperation between Colombia and Guyana.¹²⁷ The visit of Jackson to Venezuela's western neighbour and the later visit of the Colombian foreign minister to Guyana in 1981, both followed on the heels of Burnham's ill-fated visit in April of the same year to Caracas, thereby representing a concerted effort to woo Colombia at a time of impending crisis in Guyana-Venezuela relations.

Importantly for Georgetown, in 1982 the Colombian government was amongst the few Latin American governments not to back The Argentine's invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas.¹²⁸ As such, Guyana and Colombia found themselves united in

¹²⁶ "Speech of the occasion of the official visit to Guyana of the foreign minister of Colombia...Carlos Lemos Simmonds, August 18, 1981" in Jackson (1981b), pp.31-33.

¹²⁷ MFA (1981a), p.24.

¹²⁸ Anderson (1984), p.112; and *Caribbean Contact*, September 1982, p.8.

opposition to an action vociferously supported by their mutual neighbouring state. The same year also witnessed an intensification in relations between Bogotá and Georgetown. At the formal level, both countries upgraded their diplomatic relations to that of ambassadorial level, with the first Colombian ambassador to Guyana being a resident one, while the first Guyanese ambassador to Colombia was non-resident.¹²⁹ Indicative of the close collaboration between the foreign ministries in the two states was the visit to Georgetown of the secretary-general of Colombia's ministry of foreign affairs from 18-19 February 1983. As a report noted:

"Apart from an exchange of views on the territorial claims faced by the two countries, and on other international events, the Secretary-General also handed over for Guyana's consideration two draft Agreements - one on Amazonian Cooperation and the other on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation."¹³⁰

The visit provided both foreign ministries with a two-fold opportunity to strengthen their ties, that is, on the border problems with Venezuela, and functional cooperation between themselves. The growing Colombia-Guyana relationship was also of significance in another area related to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy. That is, the Colombian government had become an active lobbyist for Guyana's admission to the OAS. This was evident in 1983, for instance, when the Colombian foreign minister called for Guyana's admission to that hemispheric body.¹³¹ As will be discussed in chapter 6, Colombia's continued importance in respect of Guyana's admission to the OAS was to become further evident towards the end of 1985.

¹²⁹ MFA (1982), p.33.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ *Latin American Weekly Report*, 25 February, 1983, p.11.

So the Burnham government found a strategic ally with which to counter Venezuela. Colombia was all the more significant because it had a contentious border with Venezuela and even more because it was a country with historical and cultural ties more akin to Venezuela than Guyana. In a sense, Guyana had usurped what may be deemed a natural ally of Venezuela. An indication of the perception in Caracas of Guyana's growing friendship with Colombia is given in the words of Garavini di Turno who although writing in his capacity as an academic rather than a diplomat, nevertheless vented his opinion on the relationship Guyana developed with Colombia in relation to Caracas:

"Esta 'special relationship' Colombo-guyanese, en función antivenezolana, podría parecer, a los ojos de más de un latinoamericano, como histórico, cultural e ideológicamente 'contra natura', a este respecto, quizás sería interesante recordar que el Congreso de Colombia, en 1966, aprobó un Acuerdo en apoyo de la reclamación venezolana de la Guyana Esequiba."¹³²

If Garavini di Turno's opinion is indicative of the reaction in Caracas, the growing Bogotá-Georgetown ties represented not only the Burnham government's acquisition of another Latin American ally, but significantly, one which, according to Garavini di Turno and Braveboy-Wagner, had earlier been supportive of Venezuela's reclamation policy on Essequibo.¹³³

It should be observed that the GOG did not project Cuba in the forefront of its strategy of winning regional or international support. Yet, Havana was unambiguous in its support for Georgetown in the territorial controversy. As one newspaper has reported at the time of heightened tensions in Guyana-Venezuela relations in 1982, "Cuba has agreed to back Guyana in its territorial dispute with neighbouring Venezuela according to

¹³² Garavini di Turno (1988), p.136.

a Memorandum of Co-operation between Havana and Georgetown..."¹³⁴ Such support would have been crucial in multilateral settings such as the UN and NAM, in both of which Cuba was a member. Not targeting Cuba as a bilateral ally has to be understood against the realpolitik of geopolitics of which Burnham had long demonstrated awareness. Moreover, Washington's neutrality was likely to be preferable to its opposition to Guyana as a result of Cuban involvement. Child sums up the adverse reaction in Caracas and Brasilia to the Cuban pronouncement in favour of Guyana:

"...the possible Cuban connection to the Venezuelan-Guyanese dispute has caused concern among geopolitical writers in both Venezuela and Brazil. The Cuban link motivated one Venezuelan geopolitican (in a pre-October 1983 reference to Grenada) to argue that there exists a threat from 'a geopolitical arc in the Eastern Caribbean'."¹³⁵

Earlier, during the coalition government in 1967, Burnham had addressed the national assembly on his government's recognition that Russia was unlikely to go to Guyana's rescue in the event of a Venezuelan invasion, judging from events surrounding the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.¹³⁶ The same argument had no doubt informed the Burnham government's position on not openly seeking to engage Cuba on a bilateral basis in the controversy.

Part II: The Search for a new Mechanism

Under the terms of Article 3 of the Protocol of Port-of-Spain, its termination signalled a return to Article IV of the Geneva Agreement.¹³⁷ The latter, in effect, gave

¹³³ Braveboy-Wagner (1984), p.212.

¹³⁴ *Trinidad Guardian*, 30 June 1982, p.1.

¹³⁵ Child (1985), pp.162-163.

¹³⁶ See address in *Guyana Graphic*, 22 March 1967, p.1.

¹³⁷ See Appendix 6 for the full text of the Protocol.

the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments three months to agree on "...one of the means of settlement provided in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations..."¹³⁸ Formal discussions were commenced on 1 July 1982 with the Venezuelan government proposing bilateral negotiations with Guyana.¹³⁹ This suggestion has represented a continued theme in Caracas' agenda. That is, to engage Guyana in direct talks to the exclusion of other parties. The significance is evident given Guyana's weaknesses vis-à-vis Venezuela and this is a factor of which the Burnham-led government was cognizant. Hence it rejected the proposal, expressing a preference instead for referral to the ICJ.¹⁴⁰ This was in turn rejected by Caracas¹⁴¹, as was Guyana's later proposal of a choice of three international bodies - the ICJ, the Security Council and the UN's General Assembly.¹⁴²

With three months passing and neither side able to agree on a mutually acceptable mechanism, the two parties reverted back to the provisions in Article IV (2) of the Geneva Agreement. That is, Guyana and Venezuela "...shall refer the decision as to the means of settlement to an appropriate international organ upon which they both agree or, failing agreement on this point, to the secretary-general of the United Nations."¹⁴³ Accordingly, on 19 September 1982, the Venezuelan government proposed the secretary-

¹³⁸ See Appendix 5 for the full text of the Geneva Agreement. Article 33 of the UN Charter states, "The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice", <http://www.un.org>

¹³⁹ See *Catholic Standard*, 4 July 1982, p.4.

¹⁴⁰ Document no.50, "Nota de Rashleigh Jackson, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Guyana para José Alberto Zambrano Velasco, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela...2 de agosto de 1982", MRE (1998), pp.393-394.

¹⁴¹ Document GM 185, MRE (1983), pp.899-890.

¹⁴² "Statement by Comrade Rashleigh E. Jackson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana on...October 11, 1982 at the XXXVIIth Session of the United Nations General Assembly", Jackson (1982), p.31.

¹⁴³ Geneva Agreement, Appendix 5.

general of the UN, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, and this was accepted by the Guyanese government on 28 March 1983.¹⁴⁴ A month earlier, the Venezuelan ambassador to Guyana, Sadio Garavini di Turno and his wife were shot during an armed robbery at their house in Georgetown.¹⁴⁵ Apart from the embarrassment for the GOG, this incident did not mar relations between the two states. Indeed, the year 1983 began on an upbeat note with the shipment of bauxite from Guyana to Venezuela, following a million-dollar agreement whereby Guyana would supply its western neighbour with the metal grade bauxite it required by Inter Alumina Company of Venezuela.¹⁴⁶ The UN secretary-general accepted the new responsibility on 23 May 1983 and, in the process, designated under-secretary for political affairs, Diego Córdovez, as his personal representative in discussions between Guyana and Venezuela on finding a new means.¹⁴⁷

Following the change of government in Venezuela in early 1984, the discussions involving Córdovez were advanced between the new Caracas administration of Jaime Lusinchi and Burnham. Both governments proceeded to engage in negotiations with the UN secretary-general's personal representative and, in addition, a process of direct, secret and informal negotiations, was initiated between the governments concurrently. This writer was given an off-the-record briefing into the secret diplomacy channels which commenced on 6 July 1984. Those discussions were held mainly in London between Guyana's former foreign minister and secretary-general of the Commonwealth at the time, Shridath Ramphal, and Emilio Figueredo, as the Venezuelan foreign minister's representative. Some degree of disagreement ensued between Diego Córdovez and the

¹⁴⁴ Document GM 210, MRE (1983), pp.904-905.

¹⁴⁵ The ambassador lost an eye in the incident, *Catholic Standard*, 26 February 1983, p.1.

¹⁴⁶ *Catholic Standard*, 30 January 1983, p.1.

two countries' representatives over the mechanism to be chosen for resolving the controversy. The former is said to have wanted to build up a new means of pacific settlement that included a combination of mediation and conciliation. This is reportedly premised on the latter wanting "...to make his mark" and having "...his own ideas that he wanted to put in action". A newspaper report in 1985 does refer to the UN secretary-general Javier Perez de Cuellar presenting "several ideas" to the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments - a reference which probably refers to the initiatives devised by Córdovez.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Figueredo and Ramphal managed to convince Córdovez that his solution would result in both parties going "...back to their juridical positions".¹⁴⁹

The outcome of these discussions will be looked at in chapter 6 since the new developments took place during the era of president Desmond Hoyte in Guyana. For now, it should be registered that the secret channel of communication was revealed in the Venezuelan press, causing much negative reaction. As Garavini di Turno notes:

"La filtración en la prensa venezolana de su existencia provocó fuertes críticas entre personalidades influyentes tanto en el partido de gobierno como en la oposición, quienes consideraban que debían haber sido consultadas al respecto. Estas reacciones provocaron el aborto del 'canal' y, en buena medida, contribuyeron a la salida del mismo canciller, Morales Pául del gabinete."¹⁵⁰

Although witnessing the initial expression of concern about Guyana's economic

¹⁴⁷ MRE (1999) and MRE (1998), p423.

¹⁴⁸ *Guyana Chronicle*, 21 December 1985, p.1.

¹⁴⁹ Anonymous interview.

¹⁵⁰ Garavini di Turno (1988), p.155.

development of the Essequibo region,¹⁵¹ the advent of the Lusinchi government in Venezuela in March 1984 marked a return to cordial relations between Georgetown and Caracas. This was demonstrated by the visit of the Venezuelan foreign minister to Georgetown from 6-9 February 1985 when several areas of possible cooperation between the states - *inter alia*, agriculture, bauxite, dredging, fishing and public health - were discussed.¹⁵² It was in fact recorded that face to face contact between Morales Paúl and Guyana's foreign minister Rashleigh Jackson at the UN four months prior to the former's visit to Guyana represented the first person to person meeting between foreign ministers of Guyana and Venezuela in three years¹⁵³ - an indication of how seriously relations had deteriorated between Caracas and Georgetown during the Herrera Campíns administration. Relations with the Lusinchi government had assumed the cordiality of the first Andrés Pérez administration. Reminiscent of the discussions during that period, Burnham was reported as saying, "Guyana is ready to discuss a water for land deal to solve its century-old Essequibo border dispute with Venezuela..."¹⁵⁴ The extent to which this suggestion was serious is, however, unknown.

¹⁵¹ Document no.54, "Nota de Isidro Morales Paúl, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela para Rashleigh Jackson, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República Cooperativa de Guyana...", 20 de septiembre de 1984", MRE (1997), pp. 397-398.

¹⁵² See for instance, document no.55, "Discursos de Rashleigh E. Jackson, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Guyana, y de Isidro Morales Paúl, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela...referidos al desarrollo de las relaciones diplomáticas de ambos países en el marco de una nueva clima de cooperación y de una pronta solución a la controversia del Essequibo....", 8 de febrero de 1985", *ibid.*, pp.398-400. For the communiqué issued at the end of the visit, see document 56, *ibid.*, p.401. Full details on the areas of cooperation are produced in MRE (1986), pp.1075-1078

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Express*, 5 April 1985.

The International Approaches of the Government of Guyana

By the time of the General Assembly session commencing in 1983 Guyana and Venezuela had progressed in their negotiations under the terms of the Geneva Agreement, nevertheless, Jackson vented the usual general calls for respect for territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes and controversies at this forum. The territorial controversy was also addressed directly, during which Jackson notes *inter alia*:

"The struggle to preserve my country's territorial integrity never ceases to engage the energies and the attention of the Government and people of Guyana because of the untenable claim which Venezuela has been actively pursuing to over two-thirds of my country. We desire most ardently to free ourselves from this burden which we have borne even before our independence and to remove this canker from the relations between ourselves and our western neighbour. We wish to rid ourselves and our region of the potential for conflict which inheres in the Venezuelan claim and the manner in which it has oft-times been pursued."¹⁵⁵

In a reference to the inter-American system, Jackson also drew attention to Guyana's continued exclusion from the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the OAS.¹⁵⁶ It should be noted that during the 1983 session of the General Assembly, Guyana served as vice-president - a position for which the MFA's annual report stated Guyana did not seek nomination for.¹⁵⁷ The inference being that the country was nominated into the position based on its standing in that world body.

During the 39th session of the General Assembly in 1984, Jackson again drew attention to territorial controversy with Venezuela, indicating his government's desire for the issue to be resolved. He also used the opportunity of his speech to call on that world body, once again to "...strengthen the capacity of this organisation for increasing the

¹⁵⁵ "Statement by Cde. Rashleigh E. Jackson....October 5, 1983 in the General Debate of the XXXVIIIth Session of the United Nations General Assembly", Jackson (1983), pp.25-32.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ MFA (1983), p.2.

security of small states."¹⁵⁸ The vitriolic attack on Venezuela in the UN began to wane, however, as Guyana-Venezuela relations improved under the Jaime Lusinchi administration in Caracas.

The Commonwealth recorded the progress being made between Guyana and Venezuela in 1983. That organization's support for Guyana was again evident publicly in 1983, this time reflecting the progress that had been made between that state and Venezuela:

"In reaffirming their position adopted at Melbourne with regard to the controversy between Guyana and Venezuela...Heads of Government noted that the Governments of these countries had referred the choice of a means of settlement to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of the 1966 Geneva Agreement."

Although not registering the "deep concern" of earlier years, the Commonwealth nevertheless made a declaration that demonstrated its implicit support for Guyana:

"They welcomed the unqualified undertaking given by the Venezuelan Government to eschew the use of force as a means of settling the controversy. Stressing the importance of the sanctity of treaties and respect for defined and demarcated boundaries, Heads of Government expressed the hope that the controversy would be quickly and peacefully resolved."¹⁵⁹

The Guyanese government's active participation in the NAM continued for the rest of the Burnham years, but as renewed cooperative relations developed between Caracas and Georgetown overt lobbying against Venezuela in the NAM was curtailed.¹⁶⁰ The statement issued at the 1983 CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting suggests that Venezuela had, at a minimum, secured the neutrality it desired in CARICOM.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ "Statement by ...Rashleigh E. Jackson...at the 39th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 3 October 1984 New York", Jackson (1984), pp.23-27.

¹⁵⁹ "Final Communiqué", CHOGM, New Delhi, 23-29 November 1983, *ibid.*, p.254.

The SCMFA's communiqué in 1983 merely recorded the situation between Georgetown and Caracas, but refrained from expressing an opinion about either side.¹⁶² This is despite the PNC government's continued lobbying of that group.¹⁶³ It should be noted in this regard that same year witnessed enhanced divisions between Burnham and his counterparts in the region over the sanctioning of US military action in Grenada.¹⁶⁴

In some respects, the communiqué issued at the end of the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in 1984 at which Jackson had continued to stress respect for the principle of territorial integrity, was a matter of fact recording of developments between Guyana and Venezuela.¹⁶⁵ The 1984 meeting was also one which witnessed the growing polarisation between Burnham and some of his CARICOM colleagues. This was evident in the attempt by some heads, including Dominica's Eugenia Charles and Jamaica's Edward Seaga, to change the rules of membership in order to exclude Guyana.¹⁶⁶ Luckily for the administration in Georgetown, tensions with Venezuela subsided, as it began to engage with Caracas in the search for an alternative to the Protocol.

¹⁶⁰ See MFA (1984a) and (1985), pp.60, and pp.62-64 respectively, for details of Guyana's activities in the NAM in those years.

¹⁶¹ News Release 30/1983, "Communiqué", Caribbean Community Secretariat, 15 July 1983.

¹⁶² News Release 18/1983, "Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs", Caribbean Community Secretariat, 6 June 1983. NB. The next page of this news release was missing in the library at CARICOM headquarters.

¹⁶³ MFA (1983), p.33.

¹⁶⁴ The Burnham government condemned the US invasion that was sanctioned by some CARICOM governments, *ibid*.

¹⁶⁵ "Communiqué" in *Perspective Supplement: Fifth Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community*, Conference: Nassau, Bahamas, 4-7 July 1984. See also, "Reply by...Rashleigh Jackson...at the Tenth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs....", in Jackson (1984), pp.11-15.

¹⁶⁶ Baber and Jeffrey (1986), p.175. The SCMFA was also matter of fact in its recording of developments between Guyana and Venezuela in its 1985 communiqué, News Release 33/1985, "Communiqué of CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Meeting", Caribbean Community Secretariat, Georgetown, 16 May 1985.

The Community's advocacy in one area relating to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy did not waiver. That is, on the exclusionary clause which barred Guyana and Belize from membership of the OAS because of territorial problems with existing members, Venezuela and Guatemala, respectively. Interaction between Guyana and Brazil in the form of cooperative relations continued for the rest of the Burnham era, but on a lower political scale as the furore over Venezuela's decision not to renew the Protocol had abated in Georgetown. Economic problems confronted by the two states affected the extent of their cooperation.¹⁶⁷ Fortuitously for the Burnham government in terms of its territorial controversy at such a time, negotiations had been resumed with Venezuela both informally and via the UN secretary-general's representative.

Summary

The period 1981-1982 witnessed the return to a relationship of conflict between Guyana and Venezuela, for the first time since the signing of the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement. It was signalled by the Herrera Campíns government's decision in April 1981 not to renew that Agreement. The perception of fear in Georgetown was intensified by Caracas' vociferous support for The Argentine in the Falklands/Malvinas war in April 1982, just two months prior to the Protocol's expiry, and the related calls by certain elements in Venezuela for that state to adopt similar action regarding its claim to Essequibo. This resulted in the GOG's diplomatic onslaught against Venezuela through addresses at the UN General Assembly and other international fora.

¹⁶⁷ See MFA (1983) and (1984a), pp. 17, 19-22; and 15-18 respectively.

In accordance with Guyana's wider foreign policy berth, Colombia, and the NAM, were targeted for the first time for support in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy. The relationship with the regional CARICOM was not smooth in the latter part of Burnham's rule. The GOG had also encountered difficulties with Brazil in the mid-1970s regarding Georgetown's relationship with Havana. In spite of these tensions, the PNC administration was able to ensure that support from CARICOM states and Brazil were not lost altogether. As the relationship between Georgetown and Caracas became tense, Brazil's role emerged once again, as part of the GOG's counter-strategy to Venezuela as it had been during the difficult period in the late 1960s. Even allowing for differences between Guyana and CARICOM states, the organization also continued its advocacy within the OAS for the admission of Guyana and Belize.

The GOG successfully resisted Caracas' attempts to persuade it to engage bilaterally over the controversy, agreeing instead to the involvement of the UN secretary-general. Georgetown was clearly aware of the dangers it faced as the weaker party, if it removed the territorial controversy from the international sphere. By the end of this period, the territorial controversy had not been solved, but neither had Guyana lost any land, been invaded or ended up in a war with Venezuela, factors which point in part to the successful lobbying by the Burnham government on the international stage. Signs of an improvement in relations between Caracas and Georgetown were evident following the ascension to power of the Jaime Lusinchi government.

Chapter 6:

The Hoyte Years 1985-1992: the Move from a “Confrontation Dynamic” to a “Cooperation Dynamic”

Guyana's Relations with Venezuela

It is my contention that this period of unprecedented cooperation between Georgetown and Caracas was the result of new regimes in both states which facilitated a new approach in relations. In Venezuela, the change of government paved the way for an end to the conflictual approach of the Herrera Campíns era. The mere change in leadership (even if not of party) in Guyana nineteen years after independence was the single most important factor engendering a receptiveness to the positive signals emanating from Caracas. This has been acknowledged by Hoyte: "I was a new boy on the block. Burnham had been perceived as being a person who took a very hard and inflexible line on the border issue."¹ Facilitating the change was the increased role of personal diplomacy between Hoyte and his Venezuelan counterparts, Jaime Lusinchi and later Carlos Andrés Pérez. Barston has argued that personal diplomacy or direct contact between heads of government has become an important aspect of modern international relations, allowing leaders to improve bilateral relations.² There was certainly a meeting of minds between Hoyte and Lusinchi and later Hoyte and Andrés Pérez. As Hoyte notes of Herrera-Campíns' immediate successor to the presidency:

"I think Lusinchi accepted there is no easy solution to this problem and that if every country went back two or three hundred years, arguing what its border was at that time, there would be chaos and he agreed that the thing to do was to lower the tension and forge better relationships at all levels between the two countries; relationships between professional people, business people, farmers, educational people."³

Indeed when Hoyte took office, he acknowledged the cordial relations that had recently been re-developed with his counterpart in Caracas:

¹ Interview with Desmond Hoyte, 16 May 2000.

² Barston (1997), p.106.

"With the advent of the Accion Democratica Government in Venezuela under President Jaime Lusinchi, there has been a welcome lowering of tension between our countries and a positive response to building bridges of co-operation between our peoples."⁴

A similar conclusion was reached in a report for the American Air Force which stated:

"The incumbent Lusinchi administration, while committed to recovering the Essequibo territory benignly neglected the issue during its first months in office. President Lusinchi's approach was a marked contrast to that of his predecessor, Luis Herrera Campíns. Herrera Campíns made recovery of the Essequibo a point of national honor."⁵

Jaime Lusinchi's administration adopted a less belligerent approach than its predecessor. The relationship that ensued with Georgetown differed from that predicted by Braveboy-Wagner: "...Lusinchi, who has been running ahead in the polls, has been militant on the question of Guyanese development of the Essequibo and has warned about Cuban development in Guyana. An AD victory could mean less manoeuvrability in Guyana."⁶ Lusinchi's presidency did not signal the continuity of bad relations between Caracas and Georgetown, thereby indicating that Braveboy-Wagner's foresight was misconceived. Instead, the governments in Caracas and Georgetown were to carry on pursuing their fruitful interaction when Hoyte took office. As one newspaper reported, "Venezuela's border conflict with Guyana is 'very much on the back burner', says the South American country's Ambassador to the English-speaking Caribbean".⁷ Cooperative relations were, moreover, to continue under Lusinchi's successor, Carlos Andrés Pérez.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "The economy: the diplomatic effort: Address at the opening of the Heads of Mission Conference at the Sophia Auditorium, Georgetown, on 11 July 1986", Hoyte (1997), p.23.

⁵ Myers (1985), p.116.

⁶ Braveboy-Wagner in Hopkins (1983), p.236.

⁷ *Trinidad Guardian*, 27 February 1987, p.5.

Other factors were conducive to the change in *modus operandi* between the two states. Hoyte's emphasis on neighbouring countries being the inner core of the concentric circles of foreign policy is vital to understanding the country's relations with Venezuela. In this regard, it is apposite to note that the first visit of the Guyanese leadership during this period to Caracas was expressed as a manifestation of the declared foreign policy perspective of the administration in Georgetown. Hoyte declared:

"Last year, you will recall, I likened our foreign relations to three concentric circles. The inner circle, I explained, represents the core of those relations and embraces our neighbours, that is, contiguous countries and of course, our sister CARICOM States. I would stress again the importance of this inner core of relationships to our development prospects. My visit to Venezuela last March, on an invitation from President Jaime Lusinchi, was an important expression of that aspect of our foreign policy in action."⁸

This focus would have sent a clear signal to Caracas of Georgetown's wish for a paradigm shift in their relations from one centred on the controversy to one concerned with development.

The Hoyte administration offered the added benefit of pursuing more pragmatic policies than its predecessor. Crucially, these had the backing of the Reagan administration in Washington; most likely a significant factor in the policy direction which Caracas took towards Georgetown. This point has been elaborated on by Hoyte, who states:

"When this sort of cold war [between Guyana and western countries] came to an end and our policies changed so that the grouses that the US and other countries have were no longer valid and we were pursuing an open economy and things like that, we got tremendous help in our efforts to restore the economy. So it was that kind of situation where a lot of people seem to be warming toward Guyana, encouraging the country to pursue the path it had taken, complete the reforms being undertaken and so on. I think the Venezuelans at that time were having

⁸ "Economic independence and self-reliance: Address at the opening of the Heads of Mission Conference at the Sophia Auditorium, Georgetown, on 17 July 1987", Hoyte (1997), p.55.

their own internal problems and also they realised that Guyana was not as isolated within the western powers as it might have appeared to be years ago."⁹

The fact that Washington was openly supporting and aiding the Hoyte regime would have been evident to Caracas and therefore likely to influence policy direction towards Georgetown. It is too early, of course, to tell from the records of the State Department whether the US did seek to galvanize the Venezuelan government into cooperative relations with Guyana. Given past activity from Washington, however, such a premise is not improbable.

The leader of the UF in Georgetown, Manzoor Nadir, has argued that Venezuela's desire for closer interaction with CARICOM was a factor of influence in Caracas' courting of good relations with Georgetown. He states:

"Venezuelan presidents at that time [during the Hoyte administration] somehow were seeking to win a lot of CARICOM support for Venezuela and, as such, they couldn't isolate Guyana and they had to have an accommodating policy. So Venezuela's designs with respect to CARICOM influenced the soft position during the Hoyte administration."¹⁰

There is some merit in this argument given the desire on the part of both Venezuela and CARICOM to foster closer relations among each other, leading to tangible policy responses in this direction, as will be seen below.

The Guyanese foreign minister at the time, Rashleigh Jackson, has argued - perhaps unsurprisingly - that the effects of his country's international lobbying was a factor which caused Venezuela to opt for friendly relations with Guyana. He states:

"...Venezuela recognized that it was loosing [the battle to win support] internationally. The [Venezuelan] foreign minister at the time, Consalví, told me that whenever their emissaries went to talk about Guyana people would ask them:

⁹ Interview with Desmond Hoyte, 16 May 2000.

¹⁰ Interview with Manzoor Nadir, 29 April 2000.

'why are you bothering little Guyana?' So I think that helped to say to [the Venezuelans], 'look we have to change our tactics.'"¹¹

A state's image on the international stage is, of course, of much importance. So it is not inconceivable that the international lobbying carried out during the Burnham era - which had managed to portray Venezuela in a negative light - would have resulted in the perception that there would be need for a change of approach. Progress in other territorial disputes in the region were likely to have had influenced the trajectory of the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy. For instance, a treaty was signed between Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago in 1990 settling the two states' maritime dispute.¹² The result of all these factors was the curtailment of the GOG's international campaign against Venezuela to focus on developing ties between the two states. Georgetown's international action did not disappear altogether, but was expressed in more subtle ways.

The Hoyte-Lusinchi Formula of Cooperative Relations 1986-1988

The first evidence of the emergent pattern of relations which characterised the Hoyte-Lusinchi era occurred in February 1986 at a time when Guyana faced a massive fuel crisis resulting from its foreign exchange shortage. The government of Trinidad and Tobago, which supplied the country with oil, halted the credit given for these supplies when the Guyanese administration's debt to Port-of-Spain reached TT\$550 million.¹³ A fuel-rationing programme was introduced in Guyana on 2 February, causing queues at petrol stations. There were also long periods of electricity black outs, and water supply

¹¹ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 11 April 2000.

¹² Commonwealth Advisory Group (1997), p.104.

¹³ *Catholic Standard*, 27 April 1986, p.3.

problems as the Guyanese government attempted to conserve fuel.¹⁴ The opposition parties, most of which were united in the umbrella Patriotic Coalition for Democracy, began to organize protests against the fuel rationing.¹⁵ As the crisis enveloped the Hoyte administration, the Lusinchi government went to its rescue, in response to the approach made on behalf of Georgetown.¹⁶ An agreement was signed on 24 April 1986 between the two governments which lasted until December 1987, resulting in Guyana's fuel needs being met by Venezuela. The terms of the agreement were the result of discussions undertaken from 14-16 April 1986 when a Venezuelan economic mission headed by ambassador Pedro Sorensen visited Guyana.¹⁷ The agreement has been summarised as follows:

"Basically, the package contains a counter trade element by which Venezuela will supply principally petroleum products to Guyana and Guyana will export principally bauxite products to Venezuela. But also included in the package are agreements to expand trade in other products, investments and joint ventures to be undertaken in Guyana and credit facilities to be provided to facilitate the increased trade."¹⁸

The deal represented, essentially, an oil-for-bauxite arrangement with avenues for other areas of cooperation in trade and investments. It included a line of credit of up to US\$15 million from the Venezuelan investment bank, FINEXPO, for purchases from that country.¹⁹

There were further ties between the two countries in 1986. It is worth looking at some of the ways in which cooperation between Georgetown and Caracas was manifested

¹⁴ *Caribbean Contact*, April 1986, p.9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Catholic Standard*, 13 April 1986, p.1.

¹⁷ The agreements were signed in Caracas when the Guyanese vice-president Haslyn Parris visited, MRE (1987a), pp.167-168.

¹⁸ *Catholic Standard*, 27 April 1986, p.1. See also *ibid.*, 7 June 1986, p.3, for the specifics of the agreement.

that year in order to gauge the extent of the increased cooperation between the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments. From the perspective of Hoyte's economic diplomacy focus, the visit of a trade mission from the Asociación Venezolana de Exportadores (AVEX) of 1-5 June 1986 was significant in terms of what it represented. The group met with the private sector, including Hoyte's advisory committee, the Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Manufacturers. The same month had also witnessed the Lusinchi government's donation of twelve tons of cooking salt to Guyana. The visit from AVEX was reciprocated by that of an economic mission of the Guyanese public and private sectors to Caracas from 28 July-4 August. In the academic field, the visit of the vice-rector of Venezuela's Universidad de los Andes to Georgetown from 24-30 October resulted in the signing of the second academic cooperation agreement with the University of Guyana since 1979. This visit was preceded by one of the University of Guyana from 13-20 July. From 3-6 November, Guyana's vice-president, Haslyn Parris, headed an official visit to Caracas during which a technical and scientific programme between the two states was signed. Other areas of cooperation included the fight against malaria and rubella, as well as sporting exchanges.²⁰

Against such a backdrop of intensified activities between the two states, Venezuela's MRE declared:

"Con Guyana, el Acuerdo suscrito por medio del cual se garantiza a ese país el suministro de petróleo con facilidades financieras y las garantías de compra de bauxita por parte de Venezuela, han dado inicio a una nueva etapa en las relaciones entre los dos países. Por otra parte, la ampliación de nuestra cooperación con este país en otras áreas ha significado la reapertura de un diálogo

¹⁹ Ibid., 7 June 1986, p.3.

²⁰ MRE (1986), pp.167-171. See also document no.57: "Nota de Hugo Alvarez Pifano...para Simón Alberto Consalvi...sobre la visita a Guyana de Julián Aguirre, Vice-Rector Académico de la Universidad de los Andes...29 de octubre de 1986", MRE (1998), p.402; and MFA (1986), pp.25-28.

sincero y promisor."²¹

Similar expressions were made by the Guyanese foreign ministry which declared, "Clearly identifiable in 1986, were the significant changes in Guyana-Venezuela relations. These new initiatives were enhancing previous efforts in promoting economic, cultural and educational activities between the two states."²² The trajectory of relations was undergoing a fundamental transformation from that of the Burnham-Herrera Campíns era.

The exchange of presidential visits between the governments of Venezuela and Guyana to each other's capitals opened new paths of cooperation and set the stage for a joint approach that was to yield major developments. Hoyte's visit took place from 24-28 March 1987 and was reciprocated by Lusinchi's on 16-18 November 1987. The opinion expressed by the Guyanese president to his party cadres about his visit gives an indication of the extent of its fruitfulness: "I would like at the outset to record my opinion that the visit was good for both sides." In relation to the territorial controversy, Hoyte recorded:

"The discussions which took place between President Lusinchi and myself and the agreements which were concluded during the visit evidenced, I believe, a consensus that the existing controversy between our countries ought not to be a barrier to the furtherance of co-operation in the economic, cultural and other fields. Indeed, it would seem that such co-operation might well enhance the existing circumstances for the resolution of this problem."²³

The latter point was also elaborated in a statement released in Caracas during Hoyte's visit:

"Los dos Jefes de Estado examinaron la cuestión de la controversia entre los dos países y señalaron que el clima de amistad y entendimiento que existe entre

²¹ MRE (1987), p.144.

²² MFA (1986), p.3.

²³ Hoyte (1987), pp.5, 13-14.

Guyana y Venezuela es propicio para tratar ese aspecto fundamental de las relaciones bilaterales con flexibilidad y buena voluntad."²⁴

The president of Guyana's speech is significant in pointing to an acknowledgement by both Caracas and Georgetown that the territorial controversy should not form an obstacle to constructive relations between the two states. It signalled the recognition, especially on the part of the Guyanese government, that such a *modus operandi* may, ultimately, facilitate a resolution to the bone of contention between Guyana and Venezuela.

It is interesting to observe that even the foreign minister at the heart of much of the international lobbying since the 1970s and who continued in office for much of the Hoyte administration, viewed positively the move from confrontation to cooperation. Jackson states:

"Let me say that the visit provided, if I may plagiarise a phrase, 'Windows of opportunities'. I think it represents a shift from what I might call a confrontation dynamic to a co-operation dynamic. The visit manifests that there is today in Venezuela a fund of goodwill and a determination to build a strong lasting relationship of understanding and friendship with us."²⁵

Jackson's observation about the move away from "a confrontation dynamic" should be understood both in terms of Guyana and Venezuela's relations with each other and in the Guyanese government's international approaches. As will become evident below, there was a shift in the international lobbying which characterised earlier periods of the government of Guyana.

The understanding reached by the two presidents following their meeting in each other's capitals resulted in three important developments relating to the territorial

²⁴ Document no.58: "Comunicado Conjunto de los Gobiernos de Guyana y Venezuela con motivo de la visita efectuada a Venezuela por Hugh Desmond Hoyte, Presidente de la República Cooperativa de Guyana durante los días 24 al 28 de marzo de 1987...Caracas, 27 de marzo de 1987", MRE (1998) p.403.

²⁵ Jackson (1987).

controversy. In the first instance, the two counterparts agreed on the establishment of a Guyana-Venezuela Joint Commission; letters for which were exchanged by the countries' foreign ministers on 27 March 1987, i.e. during Hoyte's visit to Caracas.²⁶ According to the MFA, the Joint Commission is a "...mechanism that would provide coordination, consultation and evaluation of bilateral cooperation between the two states."²⁷ Hoyte explains the strategy which was envisaged in forming this body: "The idea being that if we got those relationships really going, we got interests being developed, that over time people would not want their vested interests to be disturbed by arguing about the border."²⁸

The second facet to have emerged out of the Hoyte-Lusinchi dialogue and which was important in sensitising Venezuelan interest groups was Lusinchi's moves to familiarise his Guyanese counterpart with these bodies. As Hoyte elucidates:

"...Lusinchi arranged for me to meet a wide cross-section of the society about his policy. His policy of attempting to create these cross border vested interests [involved] a lot of military people because he said to me that he had national support for this and indeed he had national support for this, including the military and the main political parties."

There was also a strategic political introduction in an attempt to pave the way for the continuation of the Hoyte-Lusinchi era of cooperation. Hoyte notes further:

"Specifically, I met Carlos Andrés Pérez who it was well known was going to be the next AD candidate at the elections and was most likely to win. I met the business community and so on and all of them said to me that they were solidly behind president Lusinchi and his policy. It was one of lowering tensions, creating goodwill and forging strong links between these interests on both sides of the border."²⁹

²⁶ MFA (1999), p.2.

²⁷ MFA (1987), p.28. See also Hoyte (1987), p.16.

²⁸ Interview with Desmond Hoyte, 16 May 2000.

²⁹ Ibid. The joint communiqué issued during the Guyanese president's visit to Caracas also bears testimony to Hoyte's meeting with the future Venezuelan incumbent, "Comunicado Conjunto", MRE (1998), p.403.

It may be argued that the extent to which the Lusinchi government familiarized key domestic groups to Hoyte is an indication of the seriousness to which that government had viewed the development of productive relations with its counterpart in Georgetown. It is also indicative that Lusinchi perceived his policy approach as long-term. This was evidenced by the decision to introduce the Guyanese leader to the next likely president of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez, someone who it will be recalled, had established good relations with Burnham during their earlier presidencies.

The third major development during this period was the clandestine meetings on the Guyana-Venezuela border between Hoyte and Lusinchi. These rendezvous were very important in cementing ties between Georgetown and Caracas, especially as they allowed the two heads of state to discuss ideas without the glare of or accountability to their domestic constituencies. The first indication that such meetings would be held can be deduced from the following newspaper report which states: "At the end of a four-day visit here [Caracas], Hoyte told a news conference he and President Jaime Lusinchi agreed to increase direct contacts to resolve the controversy over the mineral-rich Essequibo region which Venezuela claims."³⁰ The report did not allude to the fact that the links envisaged would be conducted without much publicity. As Hoyte explains, however, this was to be the nature of the meetings, at least from the GOG's perspective:

"The other thing that facilitated the good relations is something that is not well known, even in Guyana, and it is this: that we, Lusinchi and I, used to meet on the Guyana-Venezuela border privately without any bureaucrats. We would just have our foreign ministers, maybe some other persons and with no agenda. That was not to solve the border issue, but to talk generally. You got to know each other

³⁰ *Trinidad Guardian*, 29 March 1987, p.15.

and you developed mutual trust and we talked about ways and means of promoting good productive relationships between the countries."³¹

The exclusion of their respective bureaucrats from these meetings was likely to remove constraints on the interaction of the two incumbents. As such, it can be seen as a deliberate move to create an atmosphere for full and frank discussions. While it is not clear what the exact substance of these talks were, it is fair to say that they must have been an important element in advancing the good relations being encountered between the governments of Guyana and Venezuela. Evidence of at least one of the clandestine meetings is contained in a document obtained from MRE which records the two presidents getting together in the border area of Kavanayén located in Bolívar State, Venezuela, on 19 August 1988.³²

The success of the Hoyte-Lusinchi formula can be judged by the variety of arrangements entered into. These agreements are too numerous to be discussed in-depth here, nevertheless, it is worth highlighting their diversity. In the financial area, the visit of Hoyte to Caracas in 1987 resulted in an agreement signed by the two countries' foreign ministers to extend the line of credit from FINEXPO, first issued on 24 April 1986, to 31 December 1987.³³ Another agreement between the Venezuelan Investment Fund and the Bank of Guyana was signed on 16 December 1988.³⁴ Oil supply continued on the agenda when Lusinchi's visit to Georgetown in 1987 led to the decision to continue the agreement between *Petróleos de Venezuela* and the Guyana National Energy Authority

³¹ Ibid.

³² MRE (1999a), p.3. It is interesting to note that while this meeting may not have been publicised in Guyana, it was recorded in the annual report of the Venezuelan foreign ministry, MRE (1988), p.326.

³³ MRE (1987a), p.580.

³⁴ MFA (1999), p.4.

regarding the supply and finance of oil.³⁵ Cooperation diversified into non-traditional areas, for instance, the Venezuelan president offered to construct a gymnasium and create a civic park in Georgetown. The seriousness with which this proposal was made is evident in the rapid deployment of a team from Venezuela's housing authority and a construction company - Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda-INAVI and Construcción de MINDUR respectively - to Georgetown within a week of Lusinchi's visit of the 16-18 November 1987.³⁶ The construction projects were begun and completed during the government of Lusinchi's successor, Carlos Andrés Pérez.

Hailed by Guyana's president as "one of the successful stories", was an agreement to control the spread of malaria on the border area between the two countries.³⁷ Jackson has argued about the significance of the malaria control initiative vis-à-vis the territorial controversy: "I remember one time I had advanced the thesis [to the Venezuelans] that the mosquitoes don't respect the boundary, so why don't we agree on a common programme to eliminate the mosquito?"³⁸ This was, therefore, both symbolic and practical for the trajectory of relations in the area of the controversy.

The Hoyte-Lusinchi period witnessed unprecedented cooperation amongst the Guyanese and Venezuelan military. For instance, there was the visit of senior Guyanese army personnel headed by the chief of staff, major general Norman McLean, from 21-28 June 1987. This represented one of the most significant developments in Guyana-

³⁵ Ibid., p.204.

³⁶ Document no.60: "Nota de Hugo Alvarez Pifano...para Simón Consalvi, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela, sobre la visita efectuada a Guyana por César Quintana Romero, Ministro de Desarrollo Urbano. Georgetown, Guyana, 25 de noviembre de 1987", MRE (1998), p.408.

³⁷ Interview with Desmond Hoyte, 16 May 2000. The exchange of letters took place on 1 December 1988, MFA (1999), p.4.

³⁸ Interview with Rashleigh Jackson, 9 December 1999.

Venezuela relations given that the two states' armies have had a relationship of conflict in the border region since the 1960s. It will also be recalled from chapter 5 that certain elements within the Venezuelan armed forces openly called for a military solution to the controversy at a time when The Argentine had invaded the Falklands/Malvinas. Yet, five years later, the Guyanese and Venezuelan armies came together in a spirit of cooperation. The purpose of this tour, made at the invitation of the Venezuelan Ministry of Defence, was to implement an agreement signed during Hoyte's earlier trip "for the prevention and control of illegal trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances."³⁹ Such interaction during the Hoyte years paved the way for further cooperation between the two states' armed forces, leading the chief of staff of the GDF, Joe Singh, to declare, "Our engagements with the Venezuelan military are of mutual respect." Further, he emphasises the importance of collaboration:

"We [the army] don't create wars, but we have to carry out the orders of government. We work towards rapprochement; we are not permanently hostile. We work towards confidence building and try to forge relationships, emphasising the professional as well as the personal. That relationship is important in the event of maverick incidents by individual soldiers."⁴⁰

Singh's point about the military not creating wars, but acting in response to declarations at the governmental level points to the important role which civilian leadership can play in fostering good relationships between their armed forces. A similar point is made by another senior GDF officer, Fairbairn Liverpool, who argues of the Hoyte era: "I think, generally speaking, that level of cooperation resulted from political cooperation." He notes further, "...until the political powers declare the war, I think it is in the military's

³⁹ MFA (1987), pp.29, 30. See also MRE (1987a), p.580; and MRE (1987b). The latter provides the texts of agreements signed with the Hoyte government in 1987.

⁴⁰ Interview with Joe Singh, 10 December 1999.

interest to have some level of cooperation."⁴¹ So while armies may not create wars on their own, interaction at the level of government is important in fostering an atmosphere of peace between military forces. The Hoyte-Lusinchí formula has been a poignant case to advance this argument. It is interesting to observe, however, that despite the significantly improved relations between the two states, Guyanese emigrants to Venezuela, many of whom are illegal, received preferential treatment if they were born in the region claimed by Venezuela.⁴² This suggests that Venezuela's claim to Essequibo had not been completely removed from the agenda in relations between Georgetown and Caracas.

The Hoyte-Andrés Pérez Formula of Cooperative Relations 1989-1992

The inauguration of the Carlos Andrés Pérez government in February 1989 led to an intensification of the increased collaboration with Guyana which had been developed by Lusinchí. The two administrations, Hoyte's and Andrés Pérez's, built on the good relations already established and were to take the level of cooperation to new heights. Memoranda of understanding were signed with regards to cooperation in energy, air services between the two states, and the health sectors in April and July 1989, and August 1990, respectively.⁴³ An agreement aimed at promoting an increase in trade between the two countries was signed by the respective agencies - the Foreign Trade Institute of Venezuela and the Guyana Export Promotion Council - in December 1989.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Interview with Fairbairn Liverpool, 12 May 2000.

⁴² MFA (1987), p.34.

⁴³ Ibid., pp.3-4. The air link was inaugurated on 24 March 1990.

⁴⁴ MFA (1990a).

At the crux of this new plateau in friendly relations between Georgetown and Caracas laid the implementation of the Guyana-Venezuela Joint Commission which oversaw the areas of cooperation. During the fourth meeting of this body, for instance, it was agreed that the Guyanese Institute of Science and Technology would provide technical assistance in biogas systems for rural applications and in the area of glass blowing.⁴⁵ In the military field, an agreement was signed between the two countries' armies "...for the establishment of a formal relationship in the areas of military training, sports and cultural exchanges, technical and material assistance."⁴⁶ Amongst the issues covered at the inaugural meeting in Venezuela in June 1991 were activities in the frontier area, the movement of narcotics and intelligence exchange on issues of mutual interest.⁴⁷

Interactions at the highest levels, notably between Andrés Pérez and Hoyte were very significant in extending the capacity for cooperation between Georgetown and Caracas. Both leaders had engaged in dialogue before the Venezuelan president's inauguration and also met in a wider forum, CARICOM; but it was during a summit held in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela, from 8-11 November 1989 between the two presidents, that major developments occurred. One, which will be discussed in the next sub-section, related to the search for a mechanism to handle the territorial controversy. The Puerto Ordaz talks also centred on electricity interconnection between the two states, specifically between Venezuela's new hydroelectric facility - the Guri Dam - and Guyana's national electricity grid. Discussions about electricity interconnection were first raised in August

⁴⁵ Letter from Barton Scotland, head, Department of International Economic Cooperation, to President Hoyte, 9 December 1991.

⁴⁶ MFA (1999), p.5.

⁴⁷ MFA (1991), p.22.

1988 by presidents Hoyte and Lusinchi when it was agreed to examine jointly the feasibility of linking Venezuela's Electrificación del Caroní with the National Electricity Grid of Guyana.⁴⁸ It was after the Hoyte-Andrés Pérez meeting that the proposal was advanced, since three months later, Venezuela's foreign minister, Reinaldo Figueredo Planchart made an official visit to Georgetown, from 10-11 February 1990, during which a Protocol of Intent on electricity interconnection was signed with his counterpart, Rashleigh Jackson.⁴⁹ It is of note that the Venezuelan government was prepared to put in a funding request for the project to the IDB.⁵⁰ The discussions about the electricity scheme were also conducted during Jackson's subsequent official visit to Venezuela, which was made from 13-16 June 1990.⁵¹

Guyana-Venezuela relations continued to intensify during 1990, a year in which Andrés Pérez made an official visit to Guyana from 16-17 August. As the joint communiqué issued after the visit noted, "The visit of the President of Venezuela took place in the context of continuing efforts by the two countries to further strengthen the already existing network of friendly relations between Guyana and Venezuela."⁵² This statement has certainly been demonstrated by the issues which were raised during the trip. In the first instance, this was symbolised by the heads of state of Guyana and Venezuela decorating each other with their highest national awards: "Order of Excellence" and "Collar de la Orden del Libertador", respectively.⁵³ The two presidents examined the growing cooperation between their states in the health field, including

⁴⁸ "Project - Guyana-Venezuela Power Transmission Link", Hydropower Unit, Guyana National Resources Agency, 20 January 1993.

⁴⁹ MRE (1990), pp.180-181; and MFA (1999), p.12.

⁵⁰ MFA (1990b), p.19.

⁵¹ MRE (1990), p. 181.

malaria eradication. Other areas of cooperation that already existed and were discussed included the private sector; fishing and fish processing; environmental protection and sustainable development; and the campaign against the drugs trade. Regarding the latter, it was agreed to convene a specific Mixed Commission in September 1990 on this issue in order to take forward initiatives.⁵⁴ In the oil sector, although it was claimed that Venezuela's OPEC commitments prevented it from supplying oil to Guyana at below market prices, an agreement was, nevertheless, reached whereby Venezuela would be flexible on the terms and conditions of Guyana's repayments for those supplies.⁵⁵ On a separate issue in the area of trade, the Guyanese and Venezuelan administrations had been negotiating an agreement which would give certain Guyanese goods preferential access to Venezuela's markets. It was noted that the presidents "...felt that the Partial Scope Agreement between the two countries could significantly facilitate the expansion of trade between the two countries."⁵⁶ The agreement was signed eventually by Jackson and Figueredo on 27 October 1990.⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that a secret memo from the permanent secretary of the MFA to president Hoyte warned "...this arrangement is in danger of serious erosion and possibly, of collapse." At the root of the problems were the difficulties in utilizing the facilities on offer. Miles' memo notes further:

"We have not been able to take proper advantage of the essence of the arrangement, namely, the utilization of the deposits made by the Investment Fund of Venezuela for the funding of joint venture projects in Guyana. The one exception is the collaboration between Dayco and Guymine and this has been in

⁵² MFA (1990).

⁵³ Ibid., p.1.

⁵⁴ MRE (1990b), pp.3-6. The first meeting did not take place, however, until 26-30 June 1991, MRE (1992), p.441.

⁵⁵ MRE (1990b), p.5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.5.

⁵⁷ "Address by the Foreign Minister, Reinaldo Figueredo, at his office upon the signing of the Partial Agreement between Venezuela and Guyana, October 27, 1990."

dire trouble from the beginning - trouble which seems to persist despite regular discussion at the technical and political levels."⁵⁸

In spite of the administrative and other incapacities in Guyana which inhibited such ventures bearing fruition, the mere factor of the agreement being entered into represented a significant advancement in Guyanese-Venezuelan relations.

Discussions continued on electricity interconnection, noting specifically that the technical work of the pre-feasibility study was finished:

"They [the Guyanese and Venezuelan presidents] observed that the work done by the technical teams from both countries had brought the electricity link one step closer to its final fulfilment, and decided that the next step should be to formalise the request by both countries to the IDB for financing this Project."⁵⁹

This scheme never materialised in the end, due to a combination of technical and economic factors, as Hoyte has argued:

"...that project became a 'cropper' because the smallest facility you could have established was between 750 and 1000 megawatts, which is a lot of power for Guyana, and therefore, you had to have an intensive user of power at the end of the line. What we had in mind was a bauxite smelter, so the whole project was linked to the establishment of the smelter. Then just around that time, we had the recession in the world economy and nobody was interested in bauxite; the steel industry was another industry in trouble and the automobile industry and so on. So the project then faded away."⁶⁰

A further attempt to reinvigorate the move towards electricity interconnection also failed, this time due to changes in the domestic position in both Guyana and Venezuela:

"What was proposed by president Pérez was that we linked Guri with Upper Mazaruni [Guyana's earlier aborted hydroelectric power scheme] and with the power generation of these joint facilities, we could supply the whole of Guyana including the bauxite industry. We would have power to supply Suriname, if they were interested in buying because for years Suriname has been attempting to develop a hydropower facility, in a place called Kabelebo and also, most important of all, is that we would supply the northern states of Brazil with power.

⁵⁸ Memo from ambassador, Cheryl Miles, to President Hoyte, 13 December 1990, MFA.

⁵⁹ MRE (1990b), p.4.

⁶⁰ Interview with Desmond Hoyte, 16 May 2000.

That was very exciting, it was very attractive to us and we asked the Inter-American Development Bank when they were developing medium and long-term study for the power sector in Guyana to include that linkage and they were very keen on it, so that was done. However, shortly after, we lost the elections and the new government was not keen on this linkage."⁶¹

The Andrés Pérez government also had its own internal difficulties to contend with at this time. An internal MFA document describes the Venezuelan president as being "completely immobilised", following an abortive coup in Caracas in February 1992, thereby inhibiting the continued development of relations with Guyana.⁶² Electricity interconnection was, clearly, a mammoth undertaking in terms of funding. Of much more significance was what the mere discussion of the project represented: Guyanese-Venezuelan relations had developed to such a high level of cooperation and trust that not only was Caracas willing to link its electricity system to that of Guyana, but more so, the Hoyte administration was happy to participate. This is despite the long-term security risk: although relations were good at the time, a new Venezuelan president may well decide literally to pull the plug on Guyana's electricity supply, thereby plunging the country into crisis. The fact that the project even got to the stage it did is indicative of the success of bilateral relations between the Andrés Pérez and Hoyte administrations.

On a more practical level, there was the completion of the construction of a gymnasium in Georgetown and a medical faculty building at the University of Guyana, two projects deriving from Lusinchi's visit to Guyana in 1987.⁶³ A visit by the Venezuelan ministers of foreign affairs and urban development was made to Guyana for

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Draft briefing document: "Prospects for Guyana/Venezuela Bilateral Relations", p.4.

⁶³ MFA (1990c), p.3. See MRE (1990), p.182. It should be noted that in discussions which took place following Lusinchi's visit, Guyana opted to have the medical faculty building constructed rather than a civic park. See document no.60, (MRE 1998), op. cit.

the commissioning of these construction projects which have been described as being "completed by the Government of Venezuela as a gift to the people and Government of Guyana."⁶⁴ Of particular importance was the fact Hoyte had unofficial meetings with his new counterpart in the border area of the two countries. Two such meetings, at which bilateral relations were discussed in an informal setting, is recorded as taking place, once again, in Kavanayén, on 19 August 1988 and 14 June 1991.⁶⁵ Elsewhere, signs that continuity occurred in the areas of cooperation initiated during the Lusinchi government in Caracas are demonstrated by the meetings of the Joint Commission being continued, starting with the second meeting which took place in December 1989.⁶⁶

The Search for a New Mechanism

By the end of the Burnham presidency, the ideas devised by the UN secretary-general's representative, Diego Córdovez, had proved unpopular, as was discussed in chapter 5. The government of Venezuela's special envoy, Emilio Figueredo Planchart, made his own proposal for a mechanism to carry forward the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy at a meeting held in New York from 24-26 September 1985 between the Guyanese and Venezuelan foreign ministers, Rashleigh Jackson and Simón Alberto Consalví. This proposal envisaged the role of a third party's Good Offices in the

⁶⁴ MFA (1991), p.21.

⁶⁵ MRE (1991), p.170; and MRE (1999a), p.3.

⁶⁶ The Guyana-Venezuela Joint Commission met annually, with the exception of 1992 when a meeting was not held. In the period 1991-1992, the areas for collaboration under review included: mining, science and technology, tourism, the environment, health, culture, hydrology, economic and commercial issues and planning - MFA (1991), p.21; and (1992), p.13. See also MRE (1991), p.170, for details of the fourth meeting of the Joint Commission which took place from 20-23 November 1991.

search for a solution to the controversy.⁶⁷ The suggestion was met with resistance by Córdovez, resulting in continued discussions of the under-secretary general's proposals in September and November 1985.⁶⁸ As Figueredo Planchart recalls:

"I introduced the idea of the Good Office. But there was a lot of pressure from Diego Córdovez who travelled to Guyana and elsewhere in order to get his ideas into action. Eventually, the idea of a Good Office was convinced by my government and Ramphal [Guyana's special envoy in the discussions]. Ramphal and I felt that if we went into juridical mode, it would not be a solution."⁶⁹

The idea of the Good Offices began to take shape in February 1987 when the Venezuelan ambassador was instructed to inform the Guyanese administration of a flexible formula for that process:

"Se instruyó al Embajador Pedro Sorensen para plantear más alto nivel guyanés una fórmula de los Buenos Oficios que fuera lo más flexible, sencilla, menos elaborada y menos específica: un procedimiento en el cual todo fluya de manera natural y permita a las partes abordar el problema sin estar obligados a adoptar posiciones formales."⁷⁰

This proposal for flexible meetings to take place in an atmosphere where ideas can be floated without being committed was acceptable to Jackson when he met his Venezuelan counterpart in Georgetown from 10-11 March 1987. As an official document of the MRE notes:

"Reiterándose los planteamientos del Embajador Pedro Sorensen, El Ministro Jackson expresó: que estaban preparados para ser flexibles, sugiriendo comunicar al Secretario General de la ONU que los países estaban discutiendo el asunto para precisar los terminus de una nueva propuesta. Exigiendo que se le presentaran los detalles y modalidades de los Buenos Oficios."⁷¹

⁶⁷ MRE (1999a), p.2.

⁶⁸ Interview with Emilio Figueredo Planchart, 1 March 2000.

⁶⁹ Ibid. Córdovez left the UN in 1988 to take up the position of Ecuador's foreign minister, MRE (2000a), p.5.

⁷⁰ MRE (1999a), p.2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

The acceptance of the Good Offices proposal by both parties was communicated to the UN secretary-general on 6 April 1987. As the MRE has recorded:

"Los Embajadores de Venezuela y Guyana ante la ONU participan al Secretario General la disposición de ambos países de aceptar el método de los Buenos Oficios. El Secretario General comunicó que en atención a la petición, seleccionaría una personalidad que no sería un mediador, dedicándose a esta labor hasta que ambas partes lleguen a un acuerdo mutuamente aceptable. Oportunamente se meterá a la consideración de ambos gobiernos el nombre de esa persona."⁷²

Figueredo has stated that once the Good Offices idea was accepted, Brazil was suggested in the role of good officer; this idea was not, however, acceptable to Venezuela.⁷³ It was during the meeting between Andrés Pérez and Hoyte in Puerto Ordaz on 8 November 1989 that the two presidents agreed to the UN secretary-general's suggestion of Alister McIntyre as his personal representative in the role of good officer; a position to which McIntyre was designated on 11 November 1989.⁷⁴ The Grenadian-born vice-chancellor of the University of the West Indies and former secretary-general of CARICOM was not announced formally in his new position of good officer until 1 February 1990.⁷⁵

Cooperative relations between Guyana and Venezuela facilitated the emergence of the Good Offices process. A motivating factor for both Georgetown and Caracas was the desire to move the territorial issue off their immediate agenda of strengthening bilateral ties. As Hoyte states:

"...it was in those circumstances [of good relations with Venezuela] that we [Hoyte and Andrés Pérez] agreed to ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to appoint his good officer. Moreover, the choice of such a process was seen in terms of satisfying our respective populace that the border controversy was still being dealt with. We thought it would be a good thing that you have

⁷² MRE (1999a), p.3; and MRE (2000a), p.5.

⁷³ Interview with Emilio Figueredo Planchart, 1 March 2000.

⁷⁴ MRE (2000a), p.5.

⁷⁵ *Guyana Chronicle*, February 3, 1990, p.1; and MRE (2000a), p.5.

this...because, as president Lusinchi pointed out, you need always to be reassuring your opponents that you haven't swept this thing under the carpet. So that if they asked, you can say, 'well, it is in the hands of the Secretary General; you have the good officer who is talking to both sides'.⁷⁶

Hoyte's premise suggests that the Good Offices process emerged out of a desire for him and his counterpart to rid themselves of the controversy in a way that was acceptable to their domestic constituencies, thereby freeing them to advance their cooperative relations. It may be argued that from Guyana's perspective as a small state, the involvement of the UN secretary-general's Good Offices carries an inherent benefit: that is, the involvement of a third party, in particular an international one, in the discussions on the territorial controversy.

Emilio Figueredo Planchart's brother, Reinaldo, as Venezuelan foreign minister, established with his Guyanese counterpart the mechanism of facilitators in the Good Offices process during a meeting on 28 April 1990. Guyana and Venezuela would have one facilitator each to take forward the discussions and proposals in a process which would allow for the non-committal airing of ideas to resolve the controversy.⁷⁷ On the Venezuelan side, Emilio Figueredo Planchart, who had been Venezuela's special envoy in the discussions with Ramphal prior to the adoption of the mechanism and who had suggested the process, was named as that state's facilitator. Barton Scotland, who continued in his job as Deputy Chairman of the Natural Resources Agency in Guyana, assumed the role of Guyanese facilitator.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ MRE (2000a), p.5.

The contents of the facilitators' meetings - the first of which took place in New York on 13 August 1990 - have not been made public.⁷⁸ The Guyanese facilitator at this time, Barton Scotland, provides a snapshot view of the nature and conduct of those deliberations. But first, let us explore the role of the UN secretary-general and the facilitators. According to Scotland:

"The secretary-general's remit is to find a means of settlement of the controversy and the good officer's remit was that. In a sense we [the facilitators] were like the foot soldiers. In a nutshell, the process involved [is]: the controversy is always making its way back to the secretary-general as long as the controversy has not been settled. We [Scotland and Figueredo Planchart] worked with that remit, namely to work our way towards finding a means of settlement." ⁷⁹

The UN Good Offices process is arguably the most important development in the search for a resolution to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy since the failed Mixed Commission of 1966-1970. Scotland describes the *modus operandi* of the facilitators' meetings:

"... the whole idea was that we [Scotland and Figueredo Planchart] would meet and we would discuss issues pertaining to the controversy. The results of our discussions would be transmitted by each of us to our respective foreign minister. We would then take it on from there. The representative of the [UN] secretary-general was appointed, so to speak, as the conductor in the orchestra, but he didn't play an instrument. We played the instruments and that I found worked very well."⁸⁰

The imagery of the secretary-general as an orchestra's conductor points to an essential feature: while the head of the UN is charged with responsibility for overseeing the search for a resolution of the territorial controversy, he is not actually involved in the nuts and

⁷⁸ Three other meetings which took place during the Hoyte administration were: the second meeting on 23 October 1990 in New York; the third meeting on 26 January 1991 in London; and the fourth meeting on 5 April 1991 in New York, MRE(1999), p.3. The meetings were held away from Caracas and Georgetown in order to aid secrecy.

⁷⁹ Interview with Barton Scotland, 7 December 1999.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

bolts of those discussions. Although his representative, the good officer, is more directly included in the process, this is merely to ensure the dialogue between Guyana and Venezuela continues. In effect, he oversees the functioning of the mechanism. The Good Offices process, involving as it does a third party, is what Princen has termed "intermediary intervention". Within such a category, that writer's typology of the "neutral mediator" serves as a useful framework for understanding this process. Prince states, "If the intermediary has no interests whatsoever in the disputed issues - direct or indirect - but simply wants to facilitate an agreement, it is a "neutral mediator."⁸¹ The purpose of such a figure amongst parties engaged in discussion is essentially to keep the channels of dialogue going. As Princen notes further, the neutral mediator "...may be able to open lines of communication, clarify for each side the other's perceptions and intentions and even suggest steps towards meaningful, direct negotiations."⁸²

While the governments pursued friendly and extensive bilateral relations in public, the facilitators' acted as the secret diplomacy channel through which a means of settlement could be explored, away from the influence of pressure groups and the media. Maintaining the secrecy of their discussions has been an important element of the process, as the following incident described by Scotland makes clear:

"On one occasion, the good officer did send someone and that person attempted to take notes; I tell you, we [Scotland and Figueredo Planchart] were both quite put off! The result is nothing was discussed of substance and this wasn't a big agreement or anything, it was just simply that we could not do it because a pencil poised there over a notebook made everyone not want to talk."⁸³

⁸¹ Princen (1992), p.20. Ramkarran (1999), mimeo., provides further details of the function of the Good Offices of the UN secretary-general and its precedents elsewhere.

⁸² Ibid., p.22.

⁸³ Interview with Barton Scotland, op. cit. It should be noted that the process also involved the foreign ministers meeting with the good officer who sometimes flew to Georgetown and Caracas for discussions. "Secret Brief: The McIntyre Process", MFA (no date given).

The procedure was for the facilitators' to make their own notes after the meetings had taken place. Those records were then forwarded to the respective foreign ministers who used them as the basis for their own discussions.

Discussions on a Solution to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy

The discussions about a solution to the controversy have centred on Venezuela's desire for access to the Atlantic Ocean - a topic that was likely to be included in the facilitators' dialogue. This would involve the GOG ceding some territory in order to facilitate its western neighbour's outlet to the high seas. Such a scenario has been at the centre of secret discussions with Georgetown to secure a resolution to the controversy since the 1970s, as noted in chapters 4 and 5. Officially, however, Caracas maintains its claim to the whole of Essequibo. Even Burnham who has been described as "very inflexible on the territorial issue",⁸⁴ was reportedly willing to discuss certain aspects of Venezuela's proposal for a settlement. This can be gleaned from the following newspaper report which states:

"During the government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez, the interviewer [of Venezuela's *El Nacional* newspaper] said, an exit to the Atlantic was spoken of as an alternative to resolve the difference, and the Venezuelan Chancellor Morales Paúl had recently told them that "Venezuela has to have a portion of land and sea in an eventual settlement with Guyana."⁸⁵

Burnham's response is reported to have been: "'This can be discussed...'But having an entrance in the Caribbean is quite different from being owner of the land which borders

⁸⁴ Interview with David Granger, 9 December 1999.

⁸⁵ *Catholic Standard*, April 21, 1985, p.1, quoting from *El Nacional* newspaper to which Burnham had given an interview.

this sea'.⁸⁶ Even such a minor concession of discussing certain aspects of Venezuela's proposal had represented a major shift in terms of Burnham's traditional rigidity on the question of making any concessions to Venezuela.

Less than a year into office, the approach of the Hoyte administration was one of flexibility on the question of a settlement of the territorial controversy. Like the Burnham interview quoted above, the expressed willingness of the Guyanese president to look at a solution was intended for a Venezuelan audience. As the *Catholic Standard* in Georgetown reported from an interview Hoyte gave to Venezuela's *El Nacional* on 23 June 1986:

"Reminded that the Guyana Government for a long time held that it would not surrender even a millimetre of the territory, claimed by Venezuela, President Hoyte said he was not 'as a practical politician' pleased to make such declarations, which can shut doors. I am disposed to listen and study proposals, then say whether they are reasonable or not."⁸⁷

Hoyte clearly felt more at liberty to speak his mind away from his domestic audience. It is unclear whether such pronouncements were merely made to win the favour of the Venezuelan government in an attempt to reap other financial rewards for the ailing economy. A not unrelated argument is that given the pragmatism that Hoyte demonstrated in his foreign policy and in pursuing cooperative relations with the Venezuelan government, the declared flexibility on the question of a solution was part of the Guyanese president's more pragmatic approach in foreign relations.

Lusinchi's successor, Carlos Andrés Pérez, also continued discussions about a solution based on an outlet to the sea with some adjacent land. Hoyte has given a snapshot of the nature of these discussions:

⁸⁶ Ibid.

"The Venezuelans have from time to time floated many ideas, but this has never really been a formal proposal. There has always been, a few things. I remember Carlos Andrés Pérez had paid a visit to Guyana and there was a meeting at the then prime minister's residence...and we were all talking about the issue. Carlos Andrés Pérez kept harping on about 'symbolic cessions' until somebody said 'what do you have in mind for this symbolic cession?' And he drew a line right across Guyana which would have decapitated the whole of Guyana...it would have gone right across Vreed-en-Hoop [a port opposite Georgetown on the western bank of the Demerara river which is outside of Essequibo] and everything north of Vreed-en-Hoop which would have been absolutely absurd. At which point, there was complete silence; nobody picked up on this any longer. So it wasn't what I may call a very serious kind of discussion; we were not contemplating anything."⁸⁸

Venezuelan discussions did not only centre on the land/sea outlet option. As Hoyte notes further: "There were other ideas floated...what they call 'territorial correction', where you would cede a piece of land and be compensated by a piece of land ceded by them." During his visit to Guyana in August 1990, Andrés Pérez was also reported to have raised the issue of an "ideology of integration" during his speech at a state dinner. As the report noted, this suggested joint development, if not cessation of territory.⁸⁹ Whatever the discussions, Hoyte has asserted that they were not concrete proposals. "But as I have said, they were never formally put on the table; they were never formally discussed with us. We never really entertained them."⁹⁰ This argument has been backed up by Ferguson who states of his time at the MFA in Georgetown:

"We were always aware that that opens up a Pandora box that you can never control - bearing in my mind the disparity in capabilities: size, territory and so on etc. As with everything else these matters come to the table, you sit down and you talk about it - that's part of the diplomatic process - and they [the Venezuelans] from time to time came with those things [proposals]. In the time that I was there they were not issues that were seriously considered. They were discussed, but never seriously because we were conscious of the consequences,

⁸⁷ *Catholic Standard*, 13 July 1986, p.1.

⁸⁸ Interview with Desmond Hoyte.

⁸⁹ *Mirror*, 19 August 1990, p.1.

⁹⁰ Interview with Desmond Hoyte, op.cit.

the implications of such a process. To open up that route, opens up dangers, unforeseeable dangers."⁹¹

The administration in Georgetown was, therefore, cognizant of the implications of going down the road of a negotiated settlement that involved the ceding of territory.

It is clear that the Venezuelans have kept up the land/sea option first proposed by the Carlos Andrés Pérez presidency in the 1970s, as well other suggested solutions. The fact that these proposals were not formally made, at least during the Hoyte administration, suggests that the Venezuelans may have been fishing for Guyana's reaction before putting their proposed solution to the domestic audience and the government in Georgetown. This is with awareness, no doubt, that any cessation of territory is a difficult issue for any government. Hoyte has been reported as saying, "We must not close ourselves to or reject any proposal that would procure a realistic solution."⁹² Given that the Venezuelans did not put formally their proposals for a solution to his administration suggests that such a statement was either an exercise in spin doctoring and/or that the proposed solutions were not viewed as realistic by Georgetown. Indeed, Jackson who did not rule out a solution being found when interviewed by reporters, was not specific on the form(s) that solution might take. Speaking after a meeting with his Venezuelan counterpart, he is reported to have said: "I'm not going to say that a solution will not be found before President Hoyte's mandate is over but we are certainly going to try'."⁹³ While at one level this may be another case of spin doctoring, at another, it is also indicative of the close relationship developed by Jackson with his Venezuelan counterpart, Reinaldo Figueredo Planchart. Such ties are evident in a speech

⁹¹ Interview with Tyrone Ferguson, 19 May 2000.

⁹² *Catholic Standard*, 13 July 1986, p.1 quoting from an interview given by Hoyte to *El Nacional*.

given by the latter which demonstrates the informal nature with which the two could meet:

"That is why I wanted to call attention to the presence of my friend Jackson in Venezuela. I was about to go to Georgetown this Sunday since I feel we are now accustomed to seeing each other without much protocol. If one wants to talk to him as one talks to one's brother or friend, that is how we are talking. I will welcome him here as often as he wants to come to discuss any matter of importance to his country."⁹⁴

It is this type of atmosphere that was likely to provide the environment within which the means of a solution to the territorial controversy could be found. Yet the Hoyte administration did not concede any territory.

The Hoyte Administration's Approach at the International Level

It is the argument here that the pursuit and achievement of closer ties with Venezuela under the prioritised role designated to relations with neighbouring countries, resulted in a reduced need for the Hoyte administration to concentrate its attention on internationalising the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy in multilateral or other strategic fora. Such campaigning did not disappear altogether, but became subtle in its manifestation. One PNC minister has argued that Hoyte and his foreign minister, Jackson, "...took the view that a new and less overtly bellicose posture was needed both from the changes in the world and the need to concentrate on the shattered economy."⁹⁵ Evidence to support my contention can be found in an examination of the Guyanese addresses to certain international fora and/or the declarations of those organizations. It is

⁹³ *Stabroek News*, 16 August 1990, p.1.

⁹⁴ Comments made during "Address by the Foreign Minister, Reinaldo Figueredo at his office upon the signing of the Partial Agreement between Venezuela and Guyana, October 27, 1990", p.2.

⁹⁵ Anonymous interview.

recognized that the GOG's diplomatic machinery was engaged in behind the scenes lobbying amongst the traditional groups/states from which it has derived support.⁹⁶ At the very least, this would be to ensure continued awareness of the controversy's existence, irrespective of the period of good relations. It has been possible at times of conflict to gauge the extent of the government's international approaches through an analysis of the addresses/appeals to certain international organizations and states as well as in the declarations released by these fora. I suggest that an examination of these same sources would serve as an important barometer of whether internationalising Guyana's territorial controversy continued to be as important a strategy during the period of cooperative relations under Hoyte and whether any changes can be discerned. It is to these analyses that we now turn in order to gauge the argument I have made.

Relations between Georgetown and Caracas had already begun to show signs of improvement in 1984 following the ascension to office of the Jaime Lusinchi administration, as noted earlier. A perusal of the Hoyte administration's addresses to the annual sessions of the UN General Assembly reveals a move away from lobbying publicly on the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy, but with continuity in the emphasis on related themes. For instance, at the first session following Hoyte's accession to power, the government's speech stressed:

"...respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of states, the self-determination of peoples, non-use or threat of use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, collective security and multilateral cooperation on an equitable basis."⁹⁷

⁹⁶ This factor was confirmed in an anonymous interview.

⁹⁷ Rashleigh Jackson's address to the 40th session of the UN General Assembly, 1 October 1985, Jackson (1985), p.6. See also Jackson (1988a), p.7, on similar themes covered in Jackson's address to the UN Third Special Session on Disarmament in June 1988; and Jackson's address to the 42nd and 43rd sessions of the General Assembly, Jackson (1987), especially pp.37 and 22, respectively.

This suggests that Hoyte's government still perceived it important, from the perspective of its national interest, to ensure continued international emphasis on themes relating to the preservation of states. Conscious of the hiatus it was enjoying with Venezuela, Georgetown became subtle in how it addressed the territorial controversy on the world stage.

The importance of the Commonwealth continued to be stressed, despite this body seemingly falling in the outer-most of the government's concentric circles of foreign policy. A MFA report in 1987 declared: "Guyana remains fully committed to the principle and aspiration of the Commonwealth and continues to enjoy a high profile within that body."⁹⁸ As well as attendance at CHOGMs, Georgetown continued to be active in other Commonwealth activities, for instance, participation in the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, the mandate of which had been renewed in 1989.⁹⁹

The October 1985 CHOGM in Nassau was the first such summit to be convened after Hoyte had assumed the presidency. It is evident that Guyana continued to keep the members of this organization informed of developments with Venezuela. This aspect of maintaining a level of international visibility on the controversy was different from the earlier pressure brought to bear on Venezuela by the GOG at this forum. The 1985 CHOGM merely recorded the progress being made between Guyana and Venezuela:

"Heads of Government welcomed the constructive efforts under way to resolve the controversy arising from Venezuela's territorial claim to more than two-thirds of Guyana's territory. They noted that the governments of both countries had referred the choice of means of settlement to the Secretary General of the United

⁹⁸ MFA (1987), p.60.

⁹⁹ MFA (1989), p.64.

Nations in accordance with the 1966 Geneva Agreement, and had pledged every assistance for his efforts. They were encouraged by the expressed determination of the two governments to reach agreements and their hopes for a peaceful settlement."¹⁰⁰

The next CHOGM at Vancouver in 1987 also noted the growing interaction between the two states and efforts to resolve the territorial problem.¹⁰¹ This suggests that the administration did not abandon CHOGM as an international forum for discussing the Guyana-Venezuela controversy. At the same time, it is evident that there was a dichotomous shift away from Burnham-era lobbying against Venezuela to one of presenting the positive developments between the two states.

As friendly and cooperative relations intensified between Guyana and Venezuela in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the territorial controversy disappeared from the public declaration of the CHOGMs held during such times. In this regard, it is interesting to note that statements regarding Belize's territorial dispute with Guatemala continued to be included in the communiqués of the same period, suggesting that this issue continued to be troublesome. Moreover, and indicative of extent to which cooperative relations with Venezuela allowed the GOG to engage in other topical areas, was Hoyte's environmental proposal to the Commonwealth at the 1989 CHOGM:

"Heads of Government noted with appreciation the generous offer from the President of Guyana to set aside part of Guyana's Amazonian tropical forest for a pilot project under Commonwealth auspices to study utilisation of the forest on a sustainable basis and the conservation of species. They asked the Secretary-General to organise a high level exploratory mission to pursue the offer with the Guyanese authorities."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Commonwealth Secretariat (1987), p.274.

¹⁰¹ Commonwealth Secretariat (1997), p.17.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.69. Hoyte's offer to the commonwealth came to fruition when it was launched on World Environment Day, 5 June 1990, as the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development, MFA (1990b), pp. 43-44.

It is interesting to observe that the forestry area on offer falls within Essequibo, i.e. the county of Guyana claimed by Venezuela. At a time of good relations between the two states and the wider international concerns with the environment and forests, Hoyte's offer to the commonwealth did not incur the wrath of the government in Caracas.¹⁰³

If we examine the Hoyte government's speeches to the NAM we observe the continued emphasis on the principles of the movement. These include "respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes".¹⁰⁴ These factors are, of course, of relevance to Georgetown in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy. As at the UN, what is absent from the Guyanese administration's addresses under Hoyte is the overt reference to the controversy and/or condemnation of Venezuela's claim to Essequibo. In this regard, it is noteworthy that when the issues of nuclear non-proliferation and the related Latin America Treaty of Tlatelolco from which Guyana was barred as a result of the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy were addressed by the Hoyte administration, there was not a tirade against Venezuela. Instead, the Guyanese foreign minister, Rashleigh Jackson, merely referred in passing to "...the imperfections of one of its provisions which debars some of us from participating in it."¹⁰⁵ This is a mere glossing over of an issue which previously - as we have seen in chapters 4 and 5 - the GOG had campaigned against. It can only be deduced that once again, improved Guyanese-Venezuelan relations tamed the Hoyte administration's overt lobbying on the issue and its related effects. The NAM's statements on the Guyana-Venezuela

¹⁰³ This was confirmed by Professor Bishnodat Persaud, in answer to a question asked by the author of this thesis at a symposium, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 19 September 2001. Professor Persaud is a former director at the Commonwealth Secretariat and now a member of the board of trustees of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development.

controversy also reflect the mood of conciliation between Georgetown and Caracas. This is especially noted in contrast to the organization's statements on Belize-Guatemala dispute. For instance, while the 1986 summit merely "...noted the efforts being made by the Government of Guyana to consolidate its independence and sovereignty...", the same meeting recorded its "...unconditional support..." for Belize's territorial integrity.¹⁰⁶ This is not say that behind the scenes campaigning did not continue. It may be argued that the Guyanese government's hosting of the NAM in 1987, at a time when the administration was grappling with an economic crisis and a thallium scare, was just one of the diplomatic manoeuvres to ensure continued support for Guyana in the event of the controversy becoming problematic again.

Politically symbolic of the advances made during the Andrés Pérez and Hoyte administrations was the GOG's sponsorship of Venezuela's successful application for membership of the NAM at its 1989 summit in Yugoslavia. It will be recalled that the Guyanese administration's lobbying at that organization in 1983 had caused Venezuela to withdraw its application.¹⁰⁷

The Hoyte administration's move away from utilizing the technique of inflammatory speeches against Venezuela at international/regional gatherings did not deviate in relation to CARICOM.¹⁰⁸ Yet this organization continued its vigil in support of Guyana in the territorial controversy. CARICOM exercised important roles in Guyana-Venezuela relations in three respects: recording its continued support for

¹⁰⁴ Jackson's statement to the NAM Coordinating Bureau in Jackson (1987), pp.7-11. See also Jackson (1988b), pp.12-16.

¹⁰⁵ Jackson's address to the Coordinating Bureau of the NAM in Jackson (1987), p.15.

¹⁰⁶ NAM (1986), pp.142, 144.

¹⁰⁷ Griffith (1993b), p.30.

Guyana's territorial integrity; welcoming the improvement in relations between the two countries; and continuing to lobby for Guyana (and Belize's) admission to the OAS. This suggests that the GOG continued to lobby CARICOM behind the scenes in order to maintain the momentum of support within that organization. Such a premise can be understood against the background of Venezuela's continued strengthened relations with CARICOM. The Hoyte administration was supportive of Venezuela in this regard, but is likely to have been concerned about maintaining its own standing within the organization vis-à-vis Venezuela. A behind the scenes campaign to maintain CARICOM's support for Guyana in the controversy was one means to effect this. Also, it is to be noted that this was a time of regional initiatives to solve regional problems e.g. the Contadora Process in Central America. It is, therefore, likely that the GOG's cognisance of this international shift to regional conflict resolution envisaged a role for CARICOM. The Hoyte administration's inclusion of CARICOM within the innermost sanctum of its concentric circles of foreign policy is informative in this regard.

After Hoyte's appointment to the presidency, the first CARICOM heads summit was held in Georgetown from 1-4 July 1986, thereby indicating that the problems developed between Burnham and other CARICOM leaders during the early 1980s had been overcome. The statement issued after this summit stated: "Heads of Government adhered to their previously stated position on the controversy which had arisen as a result of the territorial claim advanced by Venezuela against Guyana." The CARICOM leaders were also careful to recognize the cooperation between Guyana and Venezuela on the issue:

¹⁰⁸ See, for instance, Jackson's address to the SCMFA in Jackson (1987), pp.19-25 and (1988b), pp.5-11.

"They noted the attempts being made by the two countries to resolve the issues and encouraged their continuing search for a peaceful solution. They commended the parties for cooperating fully with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the discharge of the mandate given under the terms of the Geneva Agreement of 1966, to choose a means of settlement. Heads of Government welcomed the recent improvement in Guyana/Venezuela relations and expressed the hope that this would lead to increased friendship and cooperation between them."¹⁰⁹

The SCMFA's communiqué of the same year expressed a similar viewpoint.¹¹⁰ The improved relations between Georgetown and Caracas and their cooperation with the UN secretary-general in the search for a solution was to be continually recorded in subsequent communiqués issued after the heads' and SCMFA conferences.¹¹¹

The CARICOM leaders' welcoming of the improved relations between Guyana and Venezuela underlies the fact that such ties removed an obstacle to the development of the further strengthening of relations between the regional body and Caracas. Certainly, there was an expressed desire from CARICOM to deepen its ties with Latin America, as expressed by the ninth heads' summit held in Antigua and Barbuda in 1988: "The Heads of Government reviewed the Community's relations with Latin America during the past year, and reaffirmed their desire to strengthen those relations, particularly in the areas of trade and economic cooperation."¹¹² This statement was in accordance with Hoyte's earlier declarations at the CARICOM leaders' conference held in Georgetown in 1986, in

¹⁰⁹ Caribbean Community Press Release 39/1986, 3 July 1986, p.15.

¹¹⁰ Press release .31/1986, "Twelfth Foreign Ministers Meeting Ends", 18 June 1986, p.3.

¹¹¹ See *CARICOM Perspective Special Supplement*, July-December 1987, July 1988 and December 1990 which contain the communiqués of the eighth, ninth and eleventh heads' conferences; "Opening Addresses and Communiqué: Tenth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, Grand Anse", 3-7 July 1989; *CARICOM Perspective: Communiqué and Addresses*, July-December 1991; and *CARICOM Perspective - Communiqué 1992*, on the twelfth and thirteenth conferences. See also press releases 32/1987, 37/1988, 33/1990, 41/1991 and 84/1992 which contain the communiqués of the SCMFA meetings.

¹¹² *CARICOM Perspective: Supplement*, July 1988, pp.15-16.

which he recognized that the strengthening of relations with the regional Spanish-speaking states was of benefit to both Guyana and the wider CARICOM:

"As we address the problems of the structures internal to the Community, it appears to me that it would also be necessary for us to reweave the pattern of our external economic relations. We are, in geo-strategic terms, part of the Americas. Yet, our economic ties with Latin America have been minimal, largely because of historical reasons. I believe that our efforts to reorganise and revitalise the Community's economy can be enhanced by developing a carefully structured relationship with our hemispheric neighbours including Community negotiated arrangements. Such a course would enlarge the horizon of regional development and correct the distortions of old colonial patterns."¹¹³

The removal of conflict between Guyana and Venezuela facilitated this desire for the development of increased links between CARICOM and Latin America, since the two linguistic regions would not have been pitted against each other in their support for respective sides in the territorial controversy.

The improved relations between Georgetown and Caracas also facilitated the latter's strengthening of ties with CARICOM. This observation has been made by Serbín in relation to the Lusinchi government which continued Venezuela's pursuit of a Caribbean policy. He states:

"The thrust of Venezuelan Caribbean policy has finally been helped by the improvement of relations with Guyana consequent upon the involvement of the United Nations Secretary-General in the resolution of the territorial claim. This fact, along with the cultural policy and the privileged situation of Venezuela as the principal Latin American commercial presence in the non-Hispanic Caribbean, has helped gradually to modify Caribbean views concerning Venezuela's role in the region."¹¹⁴

Indeed, Lusinchi became the first Latin American head of state of a non-CARICOM country to visit the regional body's secretariat in Georgetown in 1987. During the Venezuelan president's visit, the CARICOM secretary-general, Roderick Rainford,

¹¹³ Hoyte (1986), p.7.

pointed to CARICOM's attempts to reach out to Latin America. Such ties between Venezuela and CARICOM were not new, since they had begun to emerge during the 1970s when Venezuela's Caribbean policy was developed. Like that earlier period, but even more so now, Venezuela's relations with the English-speaking Caribbean flourished at a time of good relations between Caracas and Georgetown. In January 1990 there was an announcement that mechanisms for "increased cooperation between the Caribbean and Latin America" would be the subject of a meeting between a working group of officials from CARICOM, Venezuela and other Latin American countries.¹¹⁵

The most significant development between Guyana and Venezuela in relation to CARICOM was Georgetown's sponsorship of Caracas' application for observer status in the regional organization. This would have been an unthinkable occurrence in the early 1980s, but it became a reality a decade later. This factor more than any other demonstrates how far Guyana-Venezuela relations had advanced and the level of trust developed between the two states. Equally important in this regard was Venezuela's sponsorship of Guyana's application to join the OAS. It will be recalled that Caracas was behind the 1964 Act of Washington (incorporated as Article 8 of the OAS treaty) which barred Guyana from joining the organization because of the territorial controversy. Indeed, CARICOM had played an important role in effecting a change to Article 8 of the charter. An assistant secretary-general of CARICOM has given details of his

¹¹⁴ Serbín in Sutton (1991), p.210.

¹¹⁵ Press Release 2/1990: "Mechanism to Foster CARICOM-Latin American Cooperation", 8 January 1990, pp.1-2. The formation of the working group had earlier been proposed by Andrés Pérez during a meeting with the heads of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica St Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, *ibid.*

organization's role in campaigning for an amendment to the charter of the inter-American system:

"It manifested itself in many forms. In the first instance, in the OAS itself, CARICOM countries consistently made statements supportive of these countries [Guyana and Belize]...Then it also manifested itself in terms of communiqués and statements which they issued at various meetings in terms of the rights of these countries and support for the rights of these countries. [There was] absolute consensus from the very beginning - that's one on which I can't remember that there was ever a deferral. That is one of the areas on which they have had full and total consensus from the very beginning."¹¹⁶

A change to article 8 of the OAS charter was eventually introduced in December 1985 at the organization's fourteenth special session in Colombia. The amendment, which became known as the Protocol of Cartagena, removed the impediment to countries like Guyana joining the organization, subject to ratification of two-thirds of member states. Mirroring the aforementioned comments made by Blake, Francis argues that CARICOM's campaigning was instrumental in ensuring change:

"The unified, clear-cut position of the Commonwealth Caribbean in opposing the maintenance of Article 8 of the Charter of the Organization, resulted in meaningful reform in this provision when the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias of Article 8 was made a transitory disposition, valid until December 10, 1990, and a new article specifying the states or territories that will eventually be entitled to apply for membership in the future replaced it."¹¹⁷

After December 1985, CARICOM continued its campaign, this time aimed at getting the necessary two-thirds of OAS member-states to ratify the Cartagena Protocol. This is evident, for instance, in the statement made by CARICOM at the 1988 heads of government summit:

"They noted that all CARICOM States Members of the Organization of American States had ratified the Protocol of Cartagena which is designed to permit the entry

¹¹⁶ Interview with Byron Blake, 1 May 2000. See also Thomas (1997), especially p.28, where the points made by Blake had hitherto been enunciated.

¹¹⁷ Francis in Bryan (1986), p.48.

of Belize and Guyana in the OAS. The Heads urged those OAS Member States which have not yet done so, to ratify the Protocol at the earliest opportunity."¹¹⁸

The SCMFA had earlier made a similar statement.¹¹⁹ As part of their lobbying for ratification, the CARICOM foreign ministers made it clear that the continued exclusion of Guyana and Belize from the OAS would impact negatively on Caribbean/Latin America relations within that organization. This is evident, for instance, in the statement made at one of the foreign ministers' meetings.¹²⁰

The desired result became a reality on 11 December 1990 which was the time specified in the Protocol of Cartagena for the change to be introduced, and by which date, the appropriate ratification by two-thirds of member-states had taken place.¹²¹ Significantly, it was Venezuela which successfully sponsored Guyana's application for membership.¹²² Guyana was admitted formally to the OAS at a special session of that organization's General Assembly on 8 January 1991.¹²³ That the Guyanese and Venezuelan foreign ministers consented to entry to what may be deemed each other's respective spheres of influence is indicative of the extent to which relations between the two states had advanced during the second Carlos Andrés Pérez and Hoyte presidencies.¹²⁴ As a result of its entry as a full member into the OAS, the government in

¹¹⁸ *CARICOM Perspective Supplement*, July 1988: "Ninth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, Deep Bay, Antigua and Barbuda, 4-8 July 1988", p.15.

¹¹⁹ Press release no: 31/1986, "Twelfth Foreign Ministers Meeting Ends", 18 June 1986, p.5. See also 43/1990: "Communiqué - Meeting of CARICOM Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Guyana 16 May 1990", p.11.

¹²⁰ Press release no. 32/1987: "Thirteenth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Guyana 7-8 May 1987", p.8.

¹²¹ MFA (1990b), pp.39-40. See also Muñoz in Vaky and Muñoz (1993), especially p.91, on the entry of Guyana, as well as Belize into the OAS in the early 1990s.

¹²² Griffith (1993b), p.30; and Serbín in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1991), p.58.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Serbín, op.cit., p.58, asserts that Venezuela supported the entry of both Guyana and Belize into the OAS.

Georgetown was able to benefit from the technical assistance and funding programmes of the organization.¹²⁵

The positive influence on CARICOM of the new Guyana-Venezuela relations was further evident when Andrés Pérez announced the introduction of a one-way free trade access for CARICOM goods to his country's markets in 1991. It may be argued that the improved relations with Guyana was equally beneficial to Venezuela since it put on the back-burner an impediment to the Venezuelan government's intensified development of its Caribbean policy. As Andrés Pérez stated:

"Venezuela wants to be present among its first promoters in the Caribbean waters. To make this possible and to give a first boost to regional trade, Venezuela has decided to eliminate tariff duties for products requiring reciprocity. The establishment of the non-reciprocal free trade agreement between the countries of the Caribbean and Venezuela aims to open the way to trade flows in our Region, with the dual purpose of promoting trade between us and making way in our integration purpose."¹²⁶

In the same speech, reference was made to "The Caribbean destiny of Venezuela..." which is said to extend "...beyond its 2,800kms coastline on the Caribbean sea, our history and the common interest and fate awaiting us".¹²⁷ The Venezuelan president also noted the investment which his country had put over the years into the Caribbean through agencies such as the Venezuelan Investment Fund and announced his intention to move from observer to full member of CARICOM.¹²⁸ So, the emergent pattern of relations between Guyana and Venezuela led to dramatic developments between the two states and CARICOM.

¹²⁵ For full details, see MFA (1992a), pp.26-27.

¹²⁶ "Communiqué and Addresses: Twelfth Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community", Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2-4 July 1991, p. 19.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p18.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.20.

The focus of Guyana's relations with Brazil and Colombia - two states with which the Burnham government had cultivated relations mainly as part of its international strategy against Venezuela - was redefined within the context of Hoyte's concentric circles of Hoyte's foreign policy and the emphasis on the economy. The already existing links, even if cultivated originally in view of the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy, facilitated the increased interaction between Georgetown and these states. Hence, for instance, the year 1986 being described as the "catalyst for Guyana/Colombia relations", by the MFA.¹²⁹ This came in the wake of Prime Minister Hamilton Green's visit to Colombia for the inauguration of president Virgilio Barco during which the opportunity was taken to pursue a number of avenues to increase economic ties between Georgetown and Bogotá. These links were expected to advance with the exchange of Instruments in 1987 between the MFA and the Colombian embassy "with regard to the entry into force of the Economic, Scientific and Technical Co-operation Agreement, and the Amazonian Co-operation Agreement."¹³⁰ The strengthening of ties with Brazil also continued as the following statement by the MFA makes clear: "In 1987 the rhythm of our relations with Brazil was maintained as the Ministry sought to promote greater bilateral cooperation in areas of trade and economic development, and consular relations."¹³¹ Subsequently, the exchange of presidential visits between Hoyte and the

¹²⁹ MFA (1986), p.38. See also MFA (1985, 1989, 1990b, 1991, and 1992a) for details of Guyana-Colombia relations during the Hoyte government.

¹³⁰ For further details, see *ibid.* The former agreement was ratified by the two countries on 13 July 1987, MFA (1987), p.47.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.44. See also other MFA (1986, 1988, 1989, 1990b, 1991 and 1992a) during the Hoyte administration for details of Guyana-Brazil cooperation.

Brazilian leader, José Sarney, to each other's capitals, as well as a range of trade and economic activities served to define the new focus of the relationship with Brazil.¹³²

It is fair to say that the cooperation pursued with Brazil and Colombia was for the first time not linked specifically to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy, but rather to Georgetown's economic recovery programme. What the Hoyte administration merely did was to switch the emphasis on those ties and deepened them further. The government also began to pursue contacts with other South American countries, such as Argentina and Peru, as part of its new focus and emphasis in foreign policy.¹³³ The key point however, is that it is no longer necessary to analyse relations with Brazil and Colombia in the context of the foreign policy strategies used to counter Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo.

Summary

The Hoyte administration witnessed a hiatus in Guyana's relations with Venezuela, for which the pragmatism of Hoyte's foreign policy with its focus on the economy and ties with neighbouring states, must be credited with facilitating. This period was one which saw the introduction of the UN Good Offices mechanism as a means of searching for a solution in the territorial controversy. The agreement to take this route is indicative of the atmosphere of improved relations which also centred on a strengthening of bilateral cooperation. Significantly in terms of the international approaches of the government of Guyana to the territorial controversy was the shift in *modus operandi* from campaigning against Venezuela on the world stage to the more subtle expression of

¹³² MFA (1989), pp.36-37. See also Kirton in Jeffrey and Menke (1991), pp.220-224, for details of Guyana-Brazil cooperation during the Hoyte administration.

¹³³ See MFA (1990) for details on such bilateral links.

certain international principles of relevance in Guyana to the controversy. This has suggested that the Hoyte administration remained conscious of the importance of international action in relation to the issue but at the same time had to modify its lobbying in view of the improved relations between Georgetown and Caracas. By all appearances, it struck an effective balance between the pursuit of extensive bilateral relations while maintaining some international focus.

It is apposite to observe one unavoidable exception in our analysis of Guyana's relations with Venezuela during the Hoyte era: that is, the absence of the insights provided by State Department records since they have not yet been declassified for the period under study. Those records may be of importance in view of the fact that a significant part of Hoyte's foreign policy involved rebuilding relations with the USA which had earlier been damaged during parts of the Burnham years. Moreover, those records may reveal to what extent, if any, Washington influenced the Lusinchi and Andrés Pérez governments' positive response to Hoyte's new refocused foreign policy. Of course, those administrations in Caracas may merely have been responding to the more pragmatic foreign policy of the Hoyte administration, but until the State Department's records become available, this will probably not be confirmed. For now, speculation about the likelihood of Washington being involved will have to be confined not only to historical precedent, but also to the other indication of the US's involvement in Hoyte's attempts to repair relations in the region.

Conclusion

The Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy has represented a significant threat to Guyana's national security because of the size of the claim and Venezuela's occasionally active pursuit of its "zona en reclamación" policy. The nineteenth century Anglo-Venezuelan dispute was re-opened on the eve of the discussions surrounding British Guiana's independence. From the 1950s, the domestic political scene had become entangled with US cold war concerns as the British Guianese premier prior to independence espoused Marxism openly. The available evidence does not confirm the US's involvement in Venezuela's decision to re-open the claim in 1962. At the same time, it is evident that Washington did not dissuade Caracas from pursuing its claim at a time of grave concern over the trajectory of politics in British Guiana. Faced with the threat from a militarily and economically more powerful neighbour and in the absence of a defence agreement with a major power from 1966 to 1992, the government of Guyana utilized multilateral diplomacy and other diplomatic initiatives as its only means of defending the state's territorial integrity.

Burnham's role in the trajectory of Venezuela's renewed claim to Essequibo was significant from the discussions and signing of the 1966 Geneva Agreement, which led to the claim being designated "a controversy"; his signature being the price he was willing to pay for leading Guyana at independence. Burnham's confidence of winning the support of the Afro-Asian bloc on the world stage was also significant in the decision to internationalise the controversy. From the available evidence, it is clear that while the US and Britain did not openly support Guyana in the controversy, both Washington and London favoured Burnham and so operated clandestinely to ensure that Venezuelan action in the 1960s did not affect his hold on power. The governments of Brazil and

Trinidad and Tobago also became involved, with the motivating factor being, as with Britain and the US, to keep Jagan out of power. It has not been possible to ascertain from the available documents whether there was a shift in the policies of these states towards Burnham as he became increasingly leftist in the 1970s. It is known, however, that Burnham's relationship with the US did come under strain. The rapprochement with Washington under the Hoyte administration coincided with a strengthening of ties between Caracas and Georgetown, raising the issue of whether the US played a part in this trajectory.

The United Nations General Assembly became the key international forum where the government of Guyana sought to win international support against Venezuela's claim from 1966 to 1992. Burnham's prediction about support from the Afro-Asian bloc was important in that organization, where that grouping comprises the majority of its members. Other important international fora included the NAM, the Commonwealth and the regional Caribbean Community, all of which fed into the support received at the UN. Relations with Brazil and Colombia were cultivated because of their strategic value vis-à-vis Venezuela: the former because of its military strength and emphasis on the sanctity of treaties/maintenance of borders so defined, and the latter because of its own border dispute with Venezuela. In essence Guyana could utilize instances of commonality with Brazil and Colombia against Venezuela's claim to Essequibo.

Britain and the US were informed of developments in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy by the Guyanese government. They were not, however, overtly part of the PNC government's international campaign against Venezuela. This is because Georgetown recognized Britain's withdrawal from the issue after independence - a

withdrawal implicit in the absence of a defence agreement. It has become evident that the US also had signalled to Burnham its reluctance to get involved publicly. This was a result of the delicate balancing act between Washington's economic interests in Caracas and the support given to Burnham against Cheddi Jagan of the PPP. Nevertheless, both Britain and the US were involved in behind the scenes advocacy, most notably, in persuading Brazilian action in 1968 following the decree issued by the Venezuelan president, Raúl Leoni. The declassified documents of the Department of State and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the future may yet reveal more instances of clandestine British and US involvement in the territorial controversy to aid Burnham. While aware of the limitations of the US's open support, the government of Guyana was cognizant of the need not to antagonize Washington when it came to soliciting international support in the controversy. Hence, Georgetown was careful not to court the support of the socialist bloc bilaterally, in spite of the friendly development of other aspects of relations with those states. It is in this regard that Cuba's public support for Guyana during the period of heightened tensions between Georgetown and Caracas in the early 1980s was not encouraged openly as a bilateral strategy. The support of Havana would have been of significance and less troublesome in the multilateral setting of the NAM, of which it was a member. The government of Guyana conducted its lobbying in the General Assembly rather than the Security Council of the UN precisely because it was aware of the embarrassment an abstention by the US (or other member) in the Security Council would cause.

As a small and weak state faced with the significant threat to its national security in the form of the claim to Essequibo from the militarily, economically and territorially

larger Venezuelan state, Guyana's defence took the form of diplomatic initiatives. The Burnham government's active involvement on the international stage in general from 1970 to 1985 led to criticisms that foreign policy became the means by which his administration sought to legitimise its rule on the domestic stage, some seeing the foreign policy as a "Machiavellian" search for legitimacy. It is naturally possible to establish some link between the domestic economic problems and the question over the legitimacy of rule confronting the PNC government on the one hand and, on the other, its active role on the world stage. However, to dismiss all of the government's foreign policy on this basis alone is simplistic, and it ignores the very real threat to the state's territorial integrity as a result of the Venezuelan claim to Essequibo. It is here that some conceptualisation of foreign policy as a multifaceted field is important. The territorial controversy was the most salient foreign policy issue during periods of tension with Venezuela, while at other times goals such as prestige enhancement and economic development came to the fore. Even when relations with Venezuela had improved, the links which the GOG established with the Afro-Asian bloc through support, for instance, of African liberation struggles, were valuable when Guyana's relations with Venezuela deteriorated. To dismiss the foreign policy as serving either one goal or the other is to miss the complex and fluid characteristics of the policy field.

The international approaches of the Hoyte administration from 1985 to 1992 provided a contrast to earlier strategies. There was greater bilateral engagement between Georgetown and Caracas, influenced by the personalities of Hoyte and his Venezuelan counterparts, Jaime Lusinchí and Carlos Andrés Pérez, in facilitating the development of closer bilateral relations. These interactions were significant in leading to the most

important development in the controversy since the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement in 1970: the UN Good Offices process in 1990 under which the personal representative of the UN's secretary-general oversees the talks conducted by Guyana and Venezuela's facilitators. That process may well hold the key to a solution to the controversy in the future, providing a forum for secret discussions. Whether this transpires or not is dependent on the political motivation in both Georgetown and Caracas, as well as the capacity of the weaker state to avoid manipulation. If a solution is not found within the Good Offices process, its purpose would have been beneficial in terms of providing a mechanism within which the channels of communication between Guyana and Venezuela are kept open.

In both the 1970 and 1990 agreements, secret diplomacy played a significant part in the achievement of the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement and the Good Offices process. The thesis has provided an insight into the behind-the-scenes negotiations that took place between Guyana and Venezuela in order to effect agreements away from public scrutiny. Ultimately, this points to a major difficulty inherent in achieving a resolution to the controversy: as Garavini di Turno (1999) has observed, even if the political will exists in both Guyana and Venezuela, governments will have to convince their populations of the merits of compromise over what each side hitherto has regarded as its own rightful patrimony.

Although Venezuela has maintained its claim to Essequibo at the official level, the recurrent theme, which has emerged since the Carlos Andrés Pérez administration in the mid-1970s, is securing an outlet to the Atlantic through Guyana's cession to Venezuela of a strip of land adjacent to the outlet. The recurrence of this proposal

suggests Venezuela's recognition of the fact that Guyana is unlikely to cede the whole of Essequibo. On the one hand, this option can be conceived as a face-saving exercise for both states since it allows Guyana to retain sovereignty over the majority of Essequibo. It would also facilitate Venezuela's maritime ambitions on the high seas. As one former Venezuelan president has stated, the Atlantic is important to his country "...porque el Atlántico es la salida al mundo". This is as opposed to the Caribbean sea which has been perceived as a closed lake: "El Caribe está como encerrado. El Caribe es un lago de Panamá, América Central, el Caribe..."¹

While the relinquishing of a small portion of territory to facilitate Venezuela's access to the Atlantic might appear as a gesture of compromise for both sides, it carries an inherent danger. Like the Geneva Agreement, which some have perceived as legitimising Venezuelan claims to Essequibo, a cessation of territory by the government of Guyana could later be viewed as implying recognition of Venezuela's entire claim to Essequibo. This explains why the government of Guyana has not ceded any territory to Venezuela. At the same time, as Ewell's geopolitical analysis of Venezuela has indicated, "No major political figure can afford to advocate abandoning the Guyana claims or ceding territory to Colombia..."² Ewell's prediction has held up to and beyond the 100th anniversary of the 1899 Arbitration Award on 3 October 1999. The resolution to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy is a difficult issue that is likely to remain unresolved for some time to come.

A close working relationship like that achieved by Hoyte and Carlos Andrés Pérez/Jaime Lusinchi or the mutual and coincidental convenience to both states at any

¹ Interview with Luis Herrera Campíns, 10 March 2000.

time may bury tensions temporarily either on a de facto basis or through an agreement such as the Protocol to the Geneva Agreement. In such a scenario, as at times of a conflicting relationship, international lobbying remains the best option for the small state of Guyana vis-à-vis the large and more powerful neighbour. Whether that lobbying is aggressive, as during the Burnham era, or more subtle, as during the Hoyte period, will depend on the relationship between Georgetown and Caracas, as well as the political uses to which foreign policy may be deployed. To engage with Caracas on a purely bilateral basis is risky for Guyana as the weaker state; a factor which the post-1992 government discovered to its cost. More recently, there are signs that the post-1992 administration has become cognizant of the need to internationalise the controversy. This was demonstrated in 2000 when the government of Guyana successfully sought the action of the Commonwealth in the face of renewed activity from Venezuela towards its claim to Essequibo.³

This case study of the government of Guyana's international response from 1966 to 1992 to the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy has demonstrated the importance of diplomatic action for the national interests of small states faced with threats, especially if the adversary is a militarily or economically powerful state. Guyana is, by no means, unique as a small state facing a threat to its territorial integrity. Examples in the Latin America/Caribbean region include Guatemala's claim to the smaller Belize and the Ecuador-Peru dispute. The small state can utilize multilateral fora to gain international visibility on the problems faced. While international institutions such as the NAM have

² Ewell in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1982), p.309

³ The Commonwealth has set up a Ministerial Group on the territorial controversy with the implicit purpose being to support Guyana. See MFA (2000).

lost influence, the continued existence of the UN and regional organizations continue to provide adequate fora for small states to take action.

A well-thought out strategy is important in winning the support of the international community. The government of Guyana found it effective, for instance, to draw parallels with the implications for other states if Venezuela was allowed to renege on an agreement it had made. Here an emphasis on the sanctity of treaties, sovereignty and territorial integrity was significant in drawing the attention of the international community to the very principles by which it claims to operate, with the hope of winning international support. The utilization of such techniques requires diplomatic ability. As Linton has observed, small size is not necessarily a barrier to ability, even if small a population and resources places the diplomatic machinery of small states at a disadvantage.⁴ Indeed, the utilization of multilateral diplomacy is a key element in small states overcoming the disadvantages of small size. As this case study has shown, multilateral fora can provide for an economy of scale which is to the advantage of small states.

⁴ Linton in Clarke and Payne (1987), p.219.

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Collins, Rudolph - Guyanese career diplomat including ambassadorship to Venezuela, 1978-1984, and currently adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgetown (Georgetown).

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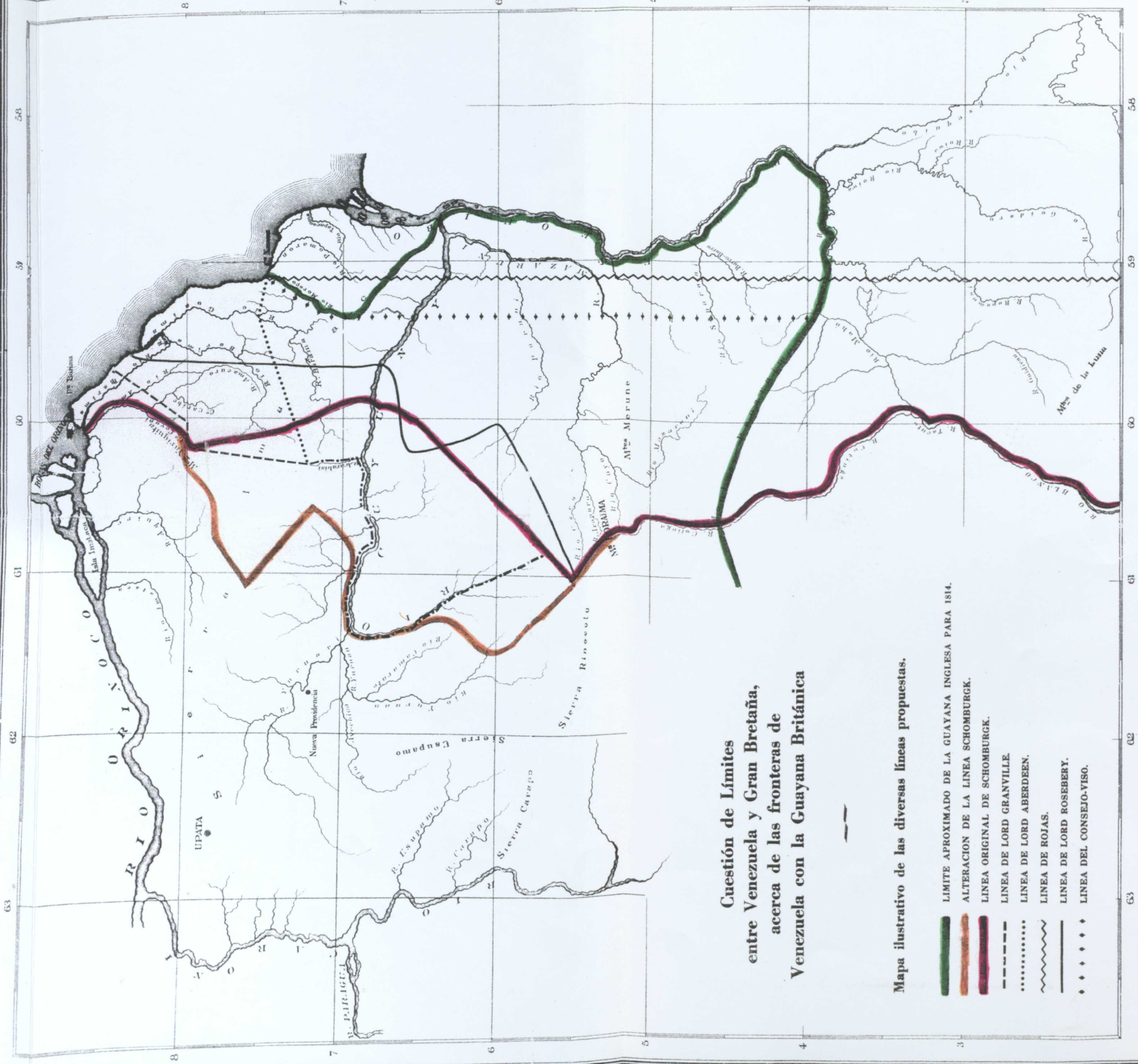
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**Cuestión de Límites
entre Venezuela y Gran Bretaña,
acerca de las fronteras de
Venezuela con la Guayana Británica**

Mapa ilustrativo de las diversas líneas propuestas.

- LÍMITE APROXIMADO DE LA GUAYANA INGLESA PARA 1814.
- ALTERACION DE LA LÍNEA SCHOMBURGG.
- LÍNEA ORIGINAL DE SCHOMBURGG.
- LÍNEA DE LORD GRANVILLE.
- LÍNEA DE LORD ABERDEEN.
- LÍNEA DE ROJAS.
- LÍNEA DE LORD ROSEBERRY.
- LÍNEA DEL CONSEJO-VISO.

Appendix 1

Map of the various boundary lines under discussion during the nineteenth century

Source: FO 371/162 665

APPENDIX 2

Treaty of Arbitration signed at Washington on 2nd February, 1897 between Great Britain and the U.S.V. and the Award of the Tribunal of Arbitration constituted under Article I of the Treaty, dated 3rd October, 1899.

WHEREAS, on the 2nd day of February, 1897, a Treaty of Arbitration was concluded between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of Venezuela in the terms following-

"Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of Venezuela, being desirous to provide for an amicable settlement of the question which has arisen between their respective Governments concerning the boundary between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela, have resolved to submit to arbitration the question involved, and to the end of concluding a Treaty for that purpose have appointed as their respective Plenipotentiaries:

"Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Right Honourable Sir Julian Pauncefote, a Member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, and of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, and Her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States:

"And the President of the United States of Venezuela, Senor Jose Andrade, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to the United States of America:

"Who, having communicated to each other their respective full powers, which were found to be in due and proper form, have agreed to and concluded the following Articles -

"ARTICLE I

"An Arbitral Tribunal shall be immediately appointed to determine the boundary-line between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela.

"ARTICLE II

"The Tribunal shall consist of five jurists: two on the part of Great Britain, nominated by the members of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, namely, the Right Honourable Baron Herschell, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, and the Honourable Sir Richard Henn Collins, Knight, one of the Justices of Her Britannic Majesty's Supreme Court of Judicature; two on the part of Venezuela, nominated, one by the President of the United States of Venezuela, namely, the Honourable Melville Weston Fuller, Chief Justice of the United States of

America, and one nominated by the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, namely, the Honourable David Josiah Brewer, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States of America; and of a fifth jurist to be selected by the four persons so nominated, or in the event of their failure to agree within three months from the date of the exchange of ratifications of the present Treaty, to be selected by His Majesty the King of Sweden and Norway. The jurist so selected shall be President of the Tribunal.

"In case of the death, absence, or incapacity to serve of any of the four Arbitrators above named, or in the event of any such Arbitrator omitting or declining or ceasing to act as such, another jurist of repute shall be forthwith substituted in his place. If such vacancy shall occur among those nominated on the part of Great Britain, the substitute shall be appointed by the members for the time being of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, acting by a majority and if among those nominated on the part of Venezuela, he shall be appointed by the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, acting by a majority. If such vacancy shall occur in the case of the fifth Arbitrator, a substitute shall be selected in the manner herein provided for with regard to the original appointment.

"ARTICLE III.

"The Tribunal shall investigate and ascertain the extent of the territories belonging to, or that might lawfully be claimed by the United Netherlands or by the Kingdom of Spain respectively at the time of the acquisition by Great Britain of the Colony of British Guiana, and shall determine the boundary-line between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela.

"ARTICLE IV.

"In deciding the matters submitted, the Arbitrators shall ascertain all facts which they deem necessary to a decision of the controversy, and shall be governed by the following Rules, which are agreed upon by the High Contracting Parties as Rules to be taken as applicable to the case, and by such principles of international law not inconsistent therewith as the Arbitrators shall determine to be applicable to the case-

"*Rules.*

" (a) Adverse holding or prescription during a period of fifty years shall make a good title. The Arbitrators may deem exclusive political control of a district, as well as actual settlement thereof, sufficient to constitute adverse holding or to make title by prescription.

" (b) The Arbitrators may recognise and give effect to rights and claims resting on any other ground whatever valid according to international law, and on any principles of international law which the Arbitrators may deem to be applicable to the case, and which are not in contravention of the foregoing rule.

" (c) In determining the boundary-line, if territory of one Party be found by the Tribunal to have been at the date of this Treaty in the occupation of the subjects or citizens of the other Party, such effect shall be given to such occupation as reason, justice, the principles of international law, and the equities of the case shall, in the opinion of the Tribunal, require.

"ARTICLE V.

"The Arbitrators shall meet at Paris, within sixty days after the delivery of the printed arguments mentioned in Article VIII, and shall proceed impartially and carefully to examine and decide the questions that have been, or shall be, laid before them, as herein provided, on the part of the Governments of Her Britannic Majesty and the United States of Venezuela respectively.

"Provided always that the Arbitrators may, if they shall think fit, hold their meetings, or any of them, at any other place which they may determine.

"All questions considered by the Tribunal, including the final decision, shall be determined by a majority of all the Arbitrators.

"Each of the High Contracting Parties shall name one person as its Agent to attend the Tribunal, and to represent it generally in all matters connected with the Tribunal.

" ARTICLE VI.

"The printed Case of each of the two Parties accompanied by the documents, the official correspondence, and other evidence on which each relies, shall be delivered in duplicate to each of the Arbitrators and to the Agent of the other Party as soon as may be after the appointment of the members of the Tribunal, but within a period not exceeding eight months from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty.

" ARTICLE VII.

"Within four months after the delivery on both sides of the printed Case, either Party may in like manner deliver in duplicate to each of the said Arbitrators, and to the Agent of the other Party, a Counter-Case, and additional documents, correspondence, and evidence, in reply to the Case, documents, correspondence and evidence so presented by the other Party.

"If in the Case submitted to the Arbitrators either Party shall have specified or alluded to any report or document in its own exclusive possession, without annexing a copy, such Party shall be bound, if the other Party thinks proper to apply for it, to furnish that Party with a copy thereof, and either Party may call upon the other, through the Arbitrators, to produce the originals or certified copies of any papers adduced as evidence, giving in each instance notice thereof within thirty days after delivery of the

Case, and the original or copy so requested shall be delivered as soon as may be, and within a period not exceeding forty days after receipt of notice.

"ARTICLE VIII.

"It shall be the duty of the Agent of each Party, within three months after the expiration of the time limited for the delivery of the Counter-Case on both sides, to deliver in duplicate to each of the said Arbitrators, and to the Agent of the other Party, a printed argument showing the points, and referring to the evidence upon which his Government relies, and either Party may also support the same before the Arbitrators by oral argument of Counsel; and the Arbitrators may, if they desire further elucidation with regard to any point, require a written or printed statement or argument, or oral argument by Counsel upon it; but in such case the other Party shall be entitled to reply either orally or in writing, as the case may be.

"ARTICLE IX.

"The Arbitrators may, for any cause deemed by them sufficient, enlarge either of the periods fixed by Articles VI, VII and VIII by the allowance of thirty days additional.

"ARTICLE X.

"The decision of the Tribunal shall, if possible, be made within three months from the close of the argument on both sides.

"It shall be made in writing and dated, and shall be signed by the Arbitrators who may assent to it.

"The decision shall be in duplicate, one copy whereof shall be delivered to the Agent of Great Britain for his Government, and the other copy shall be delivered to the Agent of the United States of Venezuela for his Government.

"ARTICLE XI.

"The Arbitrators shall keep an accurate record of their proceedings, and may employ the necessary officers to assist them.

"ARTICLE XII.

"Each Government shall pay its own Agent and provide for the proper remuneration of the Counsel employed by it, and of the Arbitrators appointed by it or in its behalf, and for the expense of preparing and submitting its Case to the Tribunal. All other expenses connected with the Arbitration shall be defrayed by the two Governments in equal moieties.

"ARTICLE XIII.

"The High Contracting Parties engage to consider the result of the proceeds of the Tribunal of Arbitration as a full, perfect, and final settlement of all the questions referred to the Arbitrators.

"ARTICLE XIV.

"The present Treaty shall be duly ratified by Her Britannic Majesty and by the President of the United States of Venezuela, by and with the approval of the Congress thereof, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in London or in Washington, within six months from the date hereof.

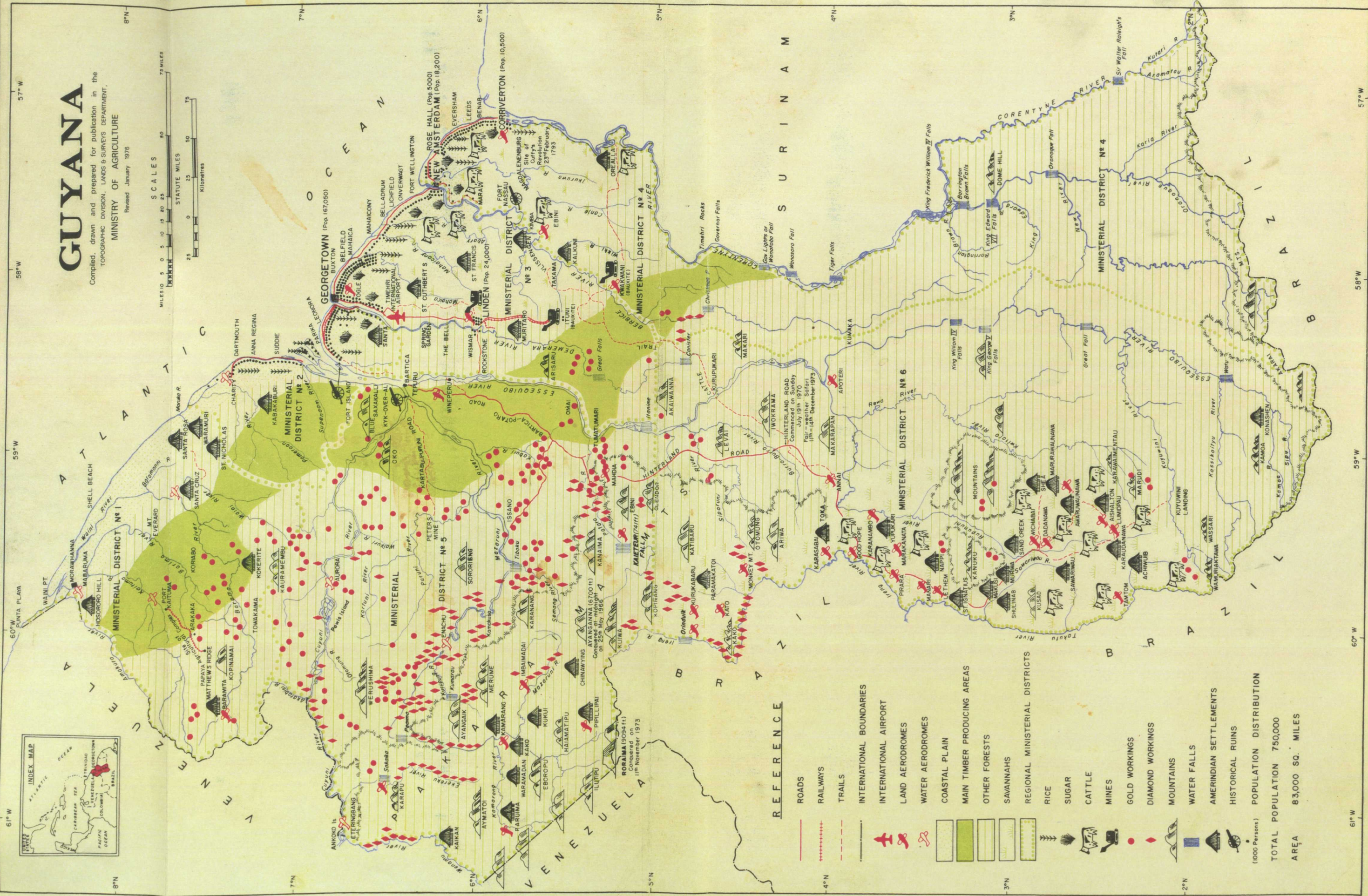
"In faith whereof we, the respective Plenipotentiaries, have signed treaty and have hereunto affixed our seals.

"Done in duplicate, at Washington, the second day of February, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven.

"L.S. JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

"L.S. JOSE ANDRADE."

Source: MFA (1984).



REFERENCE

- ROADS
- RAILWAYS
- TRAILS
- INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
- INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
- LAND AERODROMES
- WATER AERODROMES
- COASTAL PLAIN
- MAIN TIMBER PRODUCING AREAS
- OTHER FORESTS
- SAVANNAHS
- REGIONAL MINISTERIAL DISTRICTS
- RICE
- SUGAR
- CATTLE
- MINES
- GOLD WORKINGS
- DIAMOND WORKINGS
- MOUNTAINS
- WATER FALLS
- AMERICAN SETTLEMENTS
- HISTORICAL RUINS

(1000 Persons)
TOTAL POPULATION 750,000
AREA 83,000 SQ. MILES

Appendix 3

Map of Guyana

MAR CARIBE

OCEANO

ATLANTICO



REPUBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA
Ministerio del Ambiente y de los Recursos Naturales
INSTITUTO GEOGRAFICO DE VENEZUELA SIMÓN BOLÍVAR



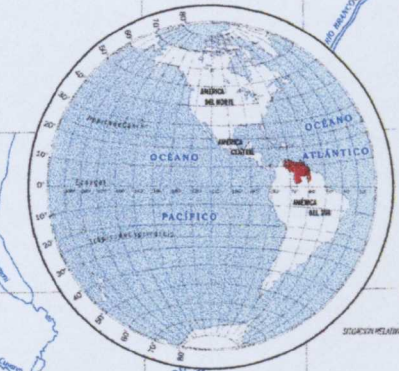
MAPA POLITICO DE LA REPUBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Capital de la República | Autopista | Capital de Estado | Capital de Municipio | Capital de Parroquia | Pueblos, Caseríos y Sitios |
| Capital de Estado | Carretera Pavedada | Carretera Expresión | Aeropuerto, Aeronave | Capital de Municipio | Pueblos, Caseríos y Sitios |
| Capital de Municipio | Carretera Pavedada | Carretera Expresión | Aeropuerto, Aeronave | Capital de Parroquia | Pueblos, Caseríos y Sitios |
| Capital de Parroquia | Carretera Pavedada | Carretera Expresión | Aeropuerto, Aeronave | Capital de Municipio | Pueblos, Caseríos y Sitios |
| Pueblos, Caseríos y Sitios | Carretera Pavedada | Carretera Expresión | Aeropuerto, Aeronave | Capital de Municipio | Pueblos, Caseríos y Sitios |

Escala: 1:2 500 000

Proyección: Cónica Conforme de Lambert. Datum: La Canoa, Hemisferio Suramericano. Fuente: IGN 1970-75. Escala: 1:2 500 000. Fuente: IGN 1970-75. Escala: 1:2 500 000. Fuente: IGN 1970-75.

Edición 2, 2001



Appendix 4

'Political' Map of Venezuela showing "Zona en Reclamación"

APPENDIX 5

The Geneva Agreement

Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in consultation with the Government of British Guiana, and the Government of Venezuela, Geneva, 17th February, 1966.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in consultation with the government of British Guiana, and the Government of Venezuela;

Taking into account the forthcoming independence of British Guiana;

Recognising that closer co-operation between British Guiana and Venezuela could bring benefit to both countries; Convinced that any outstanding controversy between the United Kingdom and British Guiana on the one hand and Venezuela on the other would prejudice the furtherance of such co-operation and should therefore be amicably resolved in a manner acceptable to both parties;

In conformity with the agenda that was agreed for the governmental conversations concerning the controversy between Venezuela and the United Kingdom over the frontier with British Guiana, in accordance with the joint communiqué of 7 November, 1963, have reached the following agreement to resolve the present controversy:-

ARTICLE I

A Mixed Commission shall be established with the task of seeking satisfactory solutions for the practical settlement of the controversy between Venezuela and the United Kingdom which has arisen as the result of the Venezuelan contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899 about the frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela is null and void.

ARTICLE II

- (1) Within two months of the entry into force of this Agreement, two representatives shall be appointed to the Mixed Commission by the Government of British Guiana and two by the Government of Venezuela.
- (2) The Government appointing a representative may at any time replace him, and shall do so immediately should one or both of its representatives be unable to act through illness or death or any other cause.
- (3) The Mixed Commission may by agreement between the representatives appoint experts to assist the Mixed Commission, either generally or in relation to any individual matter under consideration by the Mixed Commission.

ARTICLE III

The Mixed Commission shall present interim reports at intervals of six months from the date of its first meeting.

ARTICLE IV

(1) If, within a period of four years from the date of this Agreement, the Mixed Commission should not have arrived at a full agreement for the solution of the controversy it shall, in its final report, refer to the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela any outstanding questions.

Those Governments shall without delay choose one of the means of peaceful settlement provided in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

(2) If, within three months of receiving the final report, the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela should not have reached agreement regarding the choice of one of the means of settlement provided in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, they shall refer the decision as to the means of settlement to an appropriate international organ upon which they both agree or, failing agreement on this point, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. If the means so chosen do not lead to a solution of the controversy, the said organ or, as the case may be, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall choose another of the means stipulated in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, and so on until the controversy has been resolved or until all the means of peaceful settlement there contemplated have been exhausted.

ARTICLE V

In order to facilitate the greatest possible measure of cooperation and mutual understanding, nothing contained in this Agreement shall be interpreted as a renunciation or diminution by the United Kingdom, British Guiana or Venezuela of any basis of claim to territorial sovereignty in the territories of Venezuela or British Guiana, or of any previously asserted rights of or claims to such territorial sovereignty, or as prejudicing their position as regards their recognition or non-recognition of a right of, claim or basis of claim by any of them to such territorial sovereignty.

(2) No acts or activities taking place while this Agreement is in force shall constitute a basis for asserting, or denying a claim to territorial sovereignty in the territories of Venezuela or British Guiana or create any rights of sovereignty in those territories, except in so far as such acts or activities result from any agreement reached by the Mixed Commission and accepted in writing by the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela. No new claim, or enlargement of an existing claim, to territorial sovereignty in those territories shall be asserted while this Agreement is in force, nor shall any claim whatsoever be asserted other-wise than in the in the Mixed Commission while that Commission is in being.

ARTICLE VI

The Mixed Commission shall hold its first meeting at a date and place to be agreed between the Governments of British Guiana and Venezuela. This meeting shall take place as soon as possible after its members have been appointed. Thereafter the Mixed Commission shall meet as and when agreed between the representatives.

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of its signature.

Upon the attainment of independence by British Guiana, the Government of Guyana shall thereafter be a party to this Agreement, in addition to the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Venezuela.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Done in duplicate at Geneva this 17th day of February, 1966, in the English and Spanish languages, both texts being equally authoritative.

For the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

MICHAEL STEWART
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

L .F .S. BURNHAM
Prime Minister of British Guiana

For the Government of Venezuela:
IGNACIO IRIBARREN BORGES
Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Source: MFA (1984).

APPENDIX 6

The Protocol to the Geneva Agreement (Protocol of Port-of-Spain)

The Government of Guyana, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Venezuela,

Having received on this date the Final Report dated June, 1970 of the Mixed Commission established by the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in consultation with the Government of British Guiana, and the Government of Venezuela, signed at Geneva on 17th February, 1966, hereinafter referred to as the Geneva Agreement;

Convinced that the promotion of mutual confidence and positive and friendly intercourse between Guyana and Venezuela will lead to an improvement in their relations befitting neighbouring and peace-loving nations, have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

So long as this Protocol remains in force and subject to the following provisions the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela shall explore all possibilities of better understanding between them and between their peoples and in particular shall undertake periodical reviews, through normal diplomatic channels, of their relations with a view to promoting their improvement and with the aim of producing a constructive advancement of the same.

ARTICLE II

(1) So long as this Protocol remains in force no claim whatever arising out of the contention referred to in Article I of the Geneva Agreement shall be asserted by Venezuela to territorial sovereignty in the territories of Guyana or by Guyana to territorial sovereignty in the territories of Venezuela.

(2) In this Article, the references to the territories of Guyana and the territories of Venezuela shall have the same meaning as the references to the territories of British Guiana and the territories of Venezuela respectively in the Geneva Agreement.

ARTICLE III

So long as this Protocol remains in force the operation of Article IV of the Geneva Agreement shall be suspended. On the date when this Protocol ceases to be in force the functioning of that Article shall be resumed at the point at which it has been suspended, that is to say, as if the Final Report of the Mixed Commission had been submitted on that date, unless the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela have first jointly declared in writing that they have reached full agreement for the solution of the controversy referred to in the Geneva Agreement or that they have agreed upon one of the means of peaceful settlement provided for in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

ARTICLE IV

(1) So long as this Protocol remains in force Article V of the Geneva Agreement (without prejudice to its further operation after this Protocol ceases to be in force) shall have effect in relation to this Protocol as it has effect in relation to that Agreement, subject to the substitution for the words "British Guiana " wherever they occur in that Article of the word "Guyana ", and subject to the deletion from paragraph (2) of that Article of the following phrases:

(a) ", except insofar as such acts or activities result from any agreement reached by the Mixed Commission and accepted in writing by the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela "; and

(b) ", nor shall any claim whatsoever be asserted otherwise than in the Mixed Commission while that Commission is in being".

(2) The signing and the continuance of this Protocol shall not be interpreted in any way as a renunciation or diminution of any rights which any of the parties may have on the date on which this Protocol is signed or as a recognition of any situation, practice or claim existing at that date.

ARTICLE V

(1) This Protocol shall remain in force for an initial period of twelve years, renewable thereafter, subject to the provisions of this Article, for successive periods of twelve years each.

(2) Before the expiration either of the initial period or of any period of renewal the Government of Guyana and the Government of Venezuela may by agreement in writing decide that with effect from the end of any such period this Protocol shall continue in force for successive periods of renewal each less than twelve years but not less than five years.

(3) This Protocol may be terminated at the expiration of the initial period or of any period of renewal if, at least six months before the date on which it may be terminated, either the Government of Guyana or the Government of Venezuela gives to the other Governments parties to this Protocol a notice in writing to that effect.

(4) Unless terminated in accordance with paragraph (3) of this Article, this Protocol shall be deemed to have been renewed at the end of the initial period or at the end of any period of renewal, as the case may be, in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE VI

This Protocol to the Geneva Agreement shall be referred to as the Protocol of Port-of-Spain and shall come into force on the date of its signature.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Protocol.

Done in triplicate at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, this 18th day of June, 1970, in the English and Spanish languages, both texts being equally authoritative.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA

(sgd. SHRIDATH S. RAMPHAL, Minister of State

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

(sgd.) R. C. C. HUNTE, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Trinidad and Tobago.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA

(sgd.) ARISTIDES CALVANI, Minister of External Relations.

Source: MFA (1984).